Shepherds

JUNE-JULY, 1956

COMMISSION ON
MEMBERSHIP AND EVANGELISM
IN THE
LOCAL CHURCH

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June-July, 1956

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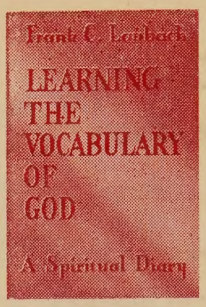

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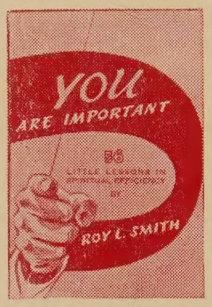

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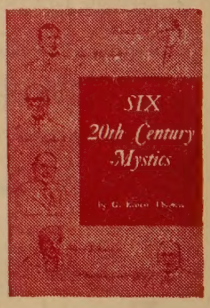

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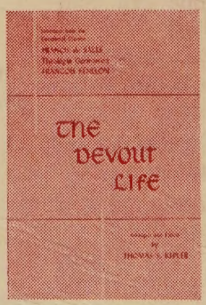

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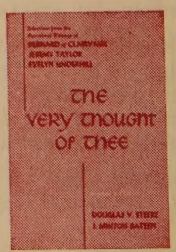

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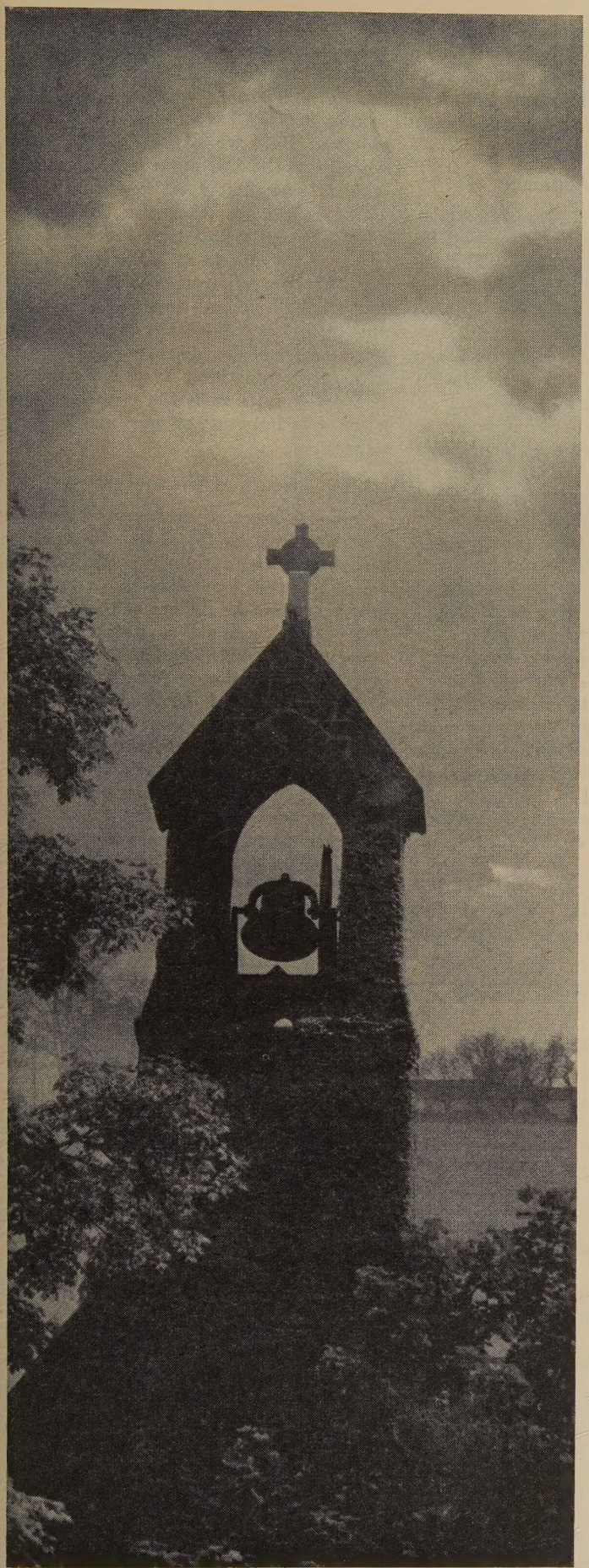


Spiritual Preparation and the Evangelistic Task

by

Helen L. Toner

Tucson, Arizona

"LOOK out on today's world through the windows of an upper room," Halford E. Luccock once counseled in discussing the Pentecost experience. If we take his advice, our evangelistic task will assume a clarity and a breadth that it has sometimes lacked.

Preparation for Evangelism

The first disciples grew in at least two ways as they looked out on *their* world through the windows of an upper room. First, they grew in their comprehension of how they were to be divinely guided in taking up Jesus' unfinished work.

Certainly, their prayers began as ours sometimes do—trying to get God to do what *they* wanted. But as the disciples shared experiences and spent more time in prayer together, they grew toward such a relationship with God that He could do for them and in them what *He* wanted. Their praying progressed to the level where God's purpose and power could get through to them.

When the feast day of Pentecost arrived, it was a day already full of sacred associations for most of the disciples. Little wonder that it was this day on which they had a group experience of being "clothed with power."

The immediate sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit was the strange ability to speak in "tongues." No matter how differently believers have interpreted this phenomenon, it obviously served to remind them of Jesus' charge to preach forgiveness and repentance to all nations and was the climax of their period of preparation. They now felt that the Holy Spirit—the Comforter, the Convincer—which Jesus had promised them was unmistakably with them.

Reading the story once again, we sense that the disciples had grown ready, at last, in the same ways that we must prepare ourselves if we are to evangelize effectively. For unless we are "clothed with power," can we expect Methodism's faith to deepen?

We are proud of our large number of new Methodists.

Yet we realize that a vital part of our evangelism today must concern itself with giving *all* of our people something more than "a vague theism" to light their way.

Certain of the Spirit's guidance, the disciples went out and worked with the faith that that guidance would enable them to do great things. Their example could mean much to us. Peter Marshall was not being simply facetious when he said that all too many Church people of our day reminded him of deep sea divers encased in "suits designed for many fathoms deep, marching bravely—to pull out plugs in bathtubs"!

Available Power

To be conscious of available power, and yet to fritter it away on trivial undertakings, is a state of affairs above which we hope to keep on rising in the next Quadrennium. For leaders tell us that they feel we will accept the challenge to go out and win the minds of men wherever sub-Christian ideologies have been making strong inroads.

Once again we turn back to the upper room for the answer to the question: "How shall we become empowered for such an outreach?"

The early disciples received the Holy Spirit when they became increasingly attentive to *Jesus'* major concerns and when they learned to pray with a cooperative will.

There is *our* answer.

There is a second respect in which growth took place within the waiting group of believers in Jerusalem. They grew in an understanding of the task that Jesus had left in their hands. This thought impels us to ask searchingly: "How well do you and I understand Jesus' unfinished business with our own contemporaries?"

Evangelistic Approach

Not long ago an editor friend sent me a copy of a disturbing letter that he had received from a physician. The doctor cited several actual examples of individuals whom he had been able to help back to what *could* be useful living through surgery. In each case, the physician's follow-up showed regression and the development of the kind of physical and mental ills that come to persons whose lives have a purposeless pattern. Concerning one of the cases the doctor wrote heatedly, "I gave this man back his life. Isn't it the Church's job to give him a reason for living?" Then came his thought-provoking accusation, "It seems to me the Church knows a lot about *using* people, but not enough about *loving* people."

"How would you answer this man?" wrote the editor. I pass the question on to you. For it seems to me that if that sentence were to burn deeply enough into our consciousness, our everyday evangelistic approach to the unchurched, to the fringe folk, and to the indifferent or perplexed who are *in* the fellowship of the Church but not *of* it could take on a "new look."

The concerned surgeon was not belittling the "using" of folks, surely. If we love them in the sense that the Master loved them, we will draw them, their energies, their skills, their interests, their means, into Christ's service. The doctor seemed rather to be asking that we keep aglow the pastoral spirit of Paul when the Apostle wrote warmly to the Corinthians: "I seek not what is *yours* but *you*" (2 Cor. 12).

We might say that the doctor was wistfully criticizing the Church at the point of its efforts at a "saving ministry." Have we forgotten that the Greek word for "redeem" means to liberate and to restore? Love has to do both, as the prophet Hosea discovered. The kind of costly loving that Hosea did in his redeeming mission is the kind that will give new impetus to *our* evangelistic efforts.

Heart of Evangelism

From subsequent events, we conclude that the first disciples, like their Master, came to look upon the shallow, the confused, the troubled, the sick, the unchallenged, the defiers of the law and those who were slaves to the law as "sheep not having a shepherd." They emerged from the upper room with a shepherd approach to the work of redeeming the world, and their accomplishments were breath-taking.

Paul later gave a striking description of this basic evangelistic approach when he wrote to Corinth: "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (II Cor. 15). Here is the foundation of genuine spiritual experience. Here, too, is the very heart of the evangelistic task.

A New Hymn for Church or Church School Dedications

(To be sung to the tune of Hymn No. 533, *The Methodist Hymnal.*)

O God and Father of mankind,
We answer to Thy call;
To build Thy Church with hand and mind
We dedicate our all.

The world is sad; the world is weak;
Mankind in misery lives;
It gropes in darkness, but doth seek
The light Christ's gospel gives.

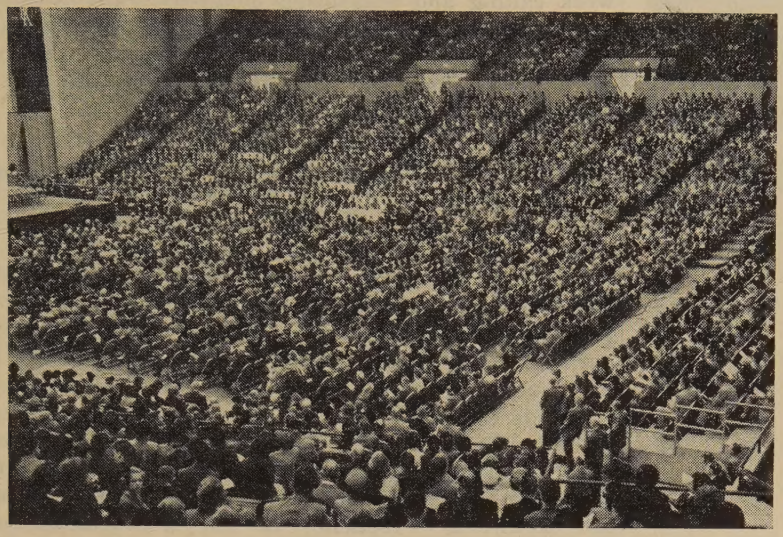
O Christ, Thy Church must live and grow,
Must meet the needs of men;
Must build the structure which will glow
With light and love within.

Thou Son of God, Thou Christ divine,
In our dear Church abide,
Our lives transform, our hearts refine,
Be Thou our daily guide.

O Christ, Thou Son of God, we pray:
Make this Thy Church divine;
May we in service each today
Reveal Thy love sublime.

by Guy O. Carpenter
First Methodist Church
West Lafayette, Indiana

EVANGELISM IN CONTEMPORARY METHODISM



By Ray W. Ragsdale
Superintendent, Los Angeles District
Southern California-Arizona Conference

THE flashback technique is well known in the motion picture industry. When this method of calling up the past is used in the matter of evangelism, one finds an interesting contrast with the evangelistic mood of today.

Roll time back for 20 years. I think my own case was quite characteristic.

Just two years out of seminary, I was trying to find my way through the maze of responsibilities that fall upon a parish minister. I knew only two forms of evangelism. One of these involved the use of revival meetings in which I had very little confidence. The other involved a major portion of a pastor's time calling upon prospective members.

A New Mood

By common consent, the members of the local church were quite willing to place all evangelistic responsibility in the hands of the minister. I had not yet heard of lay visitation evangelism. I found most of my fellow ministers operating—as I was—in an evangelistic vacuum. In some circles, I discovered that evangelism was a completely discredited word.

Today, the Church's mood respecting evangelism is entirely different. One can point to four characteristics of evangelism in contemporary Methodism.

Visitation Evangelism

The first of these is that winning people to Christ and His Church by the method of lay witness evangelism is almost universally recognized among us. It would be difficult to find a Methodist minister today who is unacquainted with the "two-by-two" visitation approach. We are indebted to Arthur E. Kernahan, Guy Black, and Dawson C. Bryan for pioneering and popularizing this plan of training laymen to do evangelistic visiting.

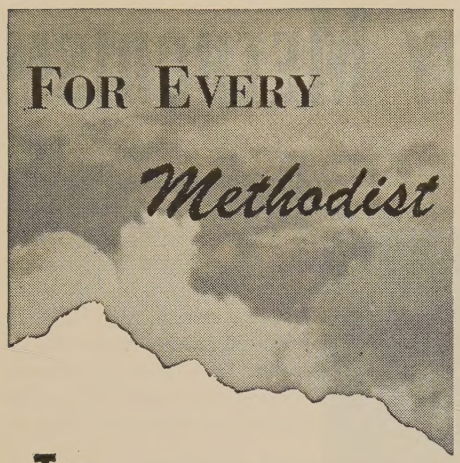
Schools of Evangelism have been held all over the land under the direction of our General Board of Evangelism. Every Area, Conference, and District has been touched in one way or another. Training and experience in evangelistic witnessing have been provided for seminary students. SHEPHERDS magazine is on the desk of every pastor. If there is any Methodist minister today who has not heard of visitation evangelism, he must be a hermit!

Thousands of laymen and lay women, too, have had experience in this form of evangelistic endeavor and are able to speak of the warm glow that comes to those who have been instruments in God's hands to bring others into the life of the Church.

Evangelistic Motivation

The second trait of evangelism today follows upon the first. While the method of visitation evangelism is well established and we know how to win people, we must acknowledge that we have not yet arrived at the point of being deeply driven to the work of evangelism. It still seems to need mechanical stimulation.

Recently, in a series of evangelistic rallies in the Southern California-Arizona Conference, Bishop Gerald Kennedy addressed some 12,000 persons. In each of the rallies, he made a practice of asking this question: "How many persons are here tonight who have won at least one person to Christ and the Church within the past six months?"



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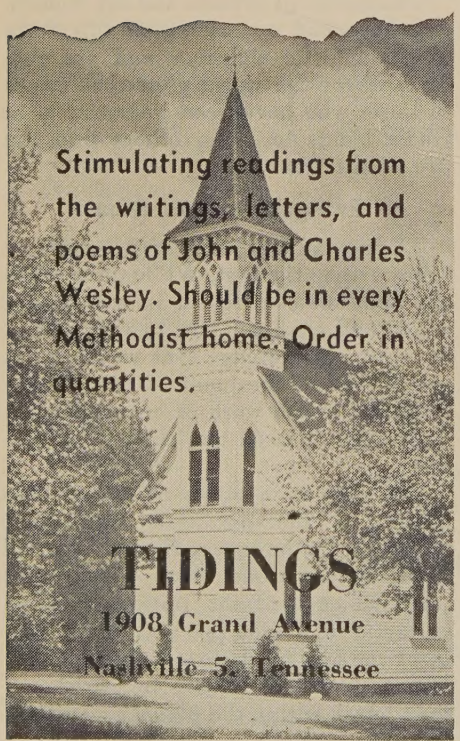
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Only a sprinkling of hands would show out of a congregation of 1,000 people!

Now and then we find some like Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Hodge, of Lakewood Church, Cleveland, who are so deeply imbued by the spirit of evangelism that they will spend three to five nights a week calling and thus bring hundreds of persons to Christ and the Church; but most laymen approach the task reluctantly as just "one more thing the Church is asking us to do!"

A pastor was expressing appreciation to a District Evangelistic Campaign director and said, "I'm glad my church could have a part in this. It will help us for weeks to come. I can't seem to get an active Fisherman's Club without the stimulation of one of these campaigns." Indeed, it does seem as though our evangelistic interest flows, not from deep artesian wells bubbling up at will, but from pumps which need repeated priming.

We are like the beginning piano student. We have a mild interest, but we are awkward. Practicing is not a pleasure. It is hard work. The liberty that comes after one has paid the price of determination and discipline has not yet come with its blessed release and full enjoyment. It appears that our evangelistic experience, too, is still embryonic.

Membership Training

Still another mark of evangelism in contemporary Methodism is seen in the growing conscientiousness about membership training and assimilation. In any group of ministers, when the subject for discussion is evangelism, great interest centers in the question: "How do you train your members, and how do you build them into the life of the church?"

In the early days of visitation evangelism there were many casualties among those who made commitments. It was falsely assumed that they were sufficiently informed to be intelligent Christians and that they would find their own way into church activities and organizations. Seldom do you find a pastor today who is so naive as to take this attitude.

The General Conference has taken this matter seriously, authorizing new materials for membership training to be prepared from time to time since Unification and maintaining now an active joint committee of the Board of Education and the Board of Evangelism on Materials for Training in Church Membership for all ages.

The Board of Evangelism has been exceedingly helpful in the preparation of additional materials to stimulate and assist the pastor in a training and assimilation program. The Membership and Evangelism Commission in the local church sees its task as incomplete until those who have been won have been instructed and connected in a vital way to the Church. The extreme conscientiousness with which many pastors face this matter speaks well for the health and sanity of the new evangelism.

Content of Commitment

There is a fourth characteristic of evangelism in Methodism today. It is a general dissatisfaction with the content of the average commitment secured by lay-visitation evangelists.

It is not difficult to get people to join the Church. Visitors can expect to bring in commitments for about 30 per cent of the people they interview. Occasionally, a life is transformed by such a visit. The callers arrived just at the right moment—a moment of crisis in that person's life—and when the decision was made, it was filled with the necessary emotional and volitional overtones to jet-propel the individual into earnest, self-motivated development in the Christian life. But more often than not, the commitment that is made is a "heady" one. "This is the thing to do." "Everyone should belong to a Church." "We must join for the sake of our children." Such is the thinking of many who sign the commitment card.

The recognition of the spiritual shallowness and the religiously uninformed state of so many persons who "sign up" has led many pastors to give careful attention to the matter of membership training and assimilation as referred to above. In addition to this, some churches are endeavoring to provide many group and individual opportunities for the development of the religious experience through religious research groups, spiritual life groups, prayer groups, etc. More and more of this must be done, or the Church is destined to reap an unhappy harvest of multitudes who may have "enough religion to make them decent, but not enough to make them dynamic."

There is concern in many quarters also to inject a greater degree of social and ethical content into the post-commitment experience. This has led to the development of more exhaustive churchmanship classes for new members, in which as much or more time is spent in discussing the Social Creed as is provided for the consideration of the history and doctrines of the Church.

How Can We Make Evangelistic Commitments Spiritually More Significant?

Some Personal Thoughts Concerning Contemporary Evangelism

by

Ray W. Ragsdale

IN connection with our evangelistic labors, some persons are wondering if something cannot be done to improve the content-quality of the commitment experience itself. Perhaps our lay-visitors should be instructed and trained to close their visits by saying something like this: "We do not want you to make a decision tonight. This is far too serious a matter. We would like you to pray about this for two weeks, and if God doesn't give you an inner assurance that this is the thing for you to do, you must not do it—not yet! Furthermore, you must have time to think through what this decision will mean in your life. There may be some habits in which you now indulge that may be inconsistent with the Christian life. You must weigh this carefully and see if you are willing to pay the price. You may be harboring some resentments that will have to be surrendered. You must have time to examine your attitudes and see if you are willing to change them as necessary to make them Christlike—your attitudes about your neighbors, about people of other faiths, about other races, about other nationalities, about other classes. Instead of asking you to sign this commitment card tonight, we want to give you another card to carry with you for you to read and re-read a hundred times during the next two weeks. Listen to what this card says. It involves ruthless self-examination.*

" ' 1. Do I tend to be unduly critical of others?
2. Do I spread gossip?
3. Do I lose my temper and say unkind things?
4. Am I jealous of anyone?
5. Am I resentful of anyone? Unforgiving?
6. Do I try to get possessions or honors that belong to someone else?
7. Do I enjoy myself in ways that are harmful to others?
8. Do I indulge in any habit which misuses my body or personality?
9. Am I lazy or irresponsible about something I should do?
10. Am I dishonest or insincere?
11. Am I concerned mainly about myself, my own affairs, my success, my future?
12. Am I snobbish? Prejudiced by the economic or political attitudes of my group?
13. Am I indifferent to those less privileged—the poor, the sick, the ignorant, those of other races?
14. Am I irreverent toward God?
15. Do I really want—God's help—to do something about these things?'

"We will come back, if we may, two weeks from tonight to get your answer. We will not urge you. If you are not ready to make this decision, you must not make it. If you prefer, and the Spirit moves you to do so, you may come forward at church when the pastor gives the invitation to Christian Discipleship. After a time of deep soul-searching, if you are willing to say 'Yes' to Christ, we shall be most happy. Our pastor will then enroll you in a training class for new members and will relate you to a prayer group that will help you to continue in your religious growth."

* Adapted from *Religious Living,* by Georgia Harkness, Association Press, 1937, pp. 40-41.

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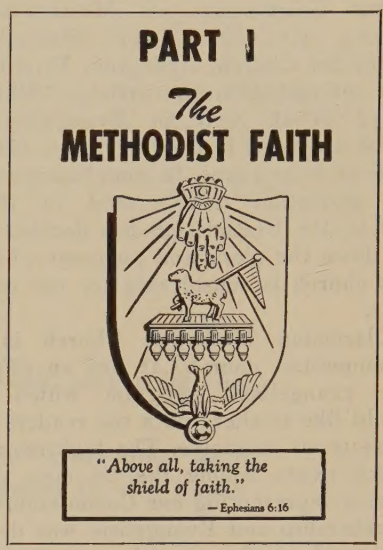
by G. Ernest Thomas



A typical page from the chart is shown in this miniature reproduction

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WHICH WAY? WHAT NEXT IN EVANGELISM?

A Statement by
The Commission on Membership and Evangelism
Clarendon Methodist Church
Arlington, Virginia

THE COMMISSION ON MEMBERSHIP AND EVANGELISM of Clarendon Methodist Church, Arlington, Virginia, was interested in the article, "Which Way? What Next in Evangelism?" which appeared in the December, 1955, issue of SHEPHERDS. In compliance with the invitation incorporated in that article, the Commission has decided to set down the plans and purposes which this church is considering for the next year.

Clarendon Methodist Church is a cosmopolitan church. It has an effective evangelistic program which it would like to share with the readers of SHEPHERDS magazine. The high morale which exists among the 26 men and women representing our Commission on Membership and Evangelism was demonstrated at the second organizational meeting when they set up and voted for a $1,000 annual budget. This budget was promptly approved by the church's official board.

An Active Church School

Clarendon has a very active church school and an educational plant which contributes significantly to the foundation of an evangelistic program. Our church school provides not only the usual Sunday activities for all age groups, beginning with the cradle, but also other activities in the field of recreation—youth summer camp, sports, drama, and music—all of which offer opportunities for added interests to prospects. Each of the church-school classes and each of the extra-curricular activities attract newcomers to our membership, possibly in some ways that they would not otherwise be reached. We consider a "live" church and church-school program to be one of the prime essentials for successful evangelism.

Commission Meetings

The Commission on Membership and Evangelism meets with the two ministers one night each month for reports, instructions, and exchange of information. A mimeographed copy of the proceedings of the previous meeting and an agenda of the business to be transacted are mailed several days in advance to each member of our Commission. The meeting opens promptly at 7:30 P.M. and closes at 9:00 P.M. Each meeting is well planned and deeply spiritual.

One night each month the Commission, together with a group of conscientious personal workers of our church's 2,500 membership, participate in a Fishermen's Club supper meeting. During the course of the meal, the ministers conduct a brief training period and distribute assignment cards to each team of two members. The assignment cards, prepared by our church secretary, contain the most complete information available about each prospect to be visited. The remainder of the evening, until 9:30 P.M., is devoted to visitation. Each team makes approximately six calls.

Information for the assignment cards is obtained principally from the registration cards distributed during each of the two morning worship services. As part of her contribution to our Commission, one of our members regularly screens these cards and gives the classified cards to our church secretary for use in making up the assignment cards.

Information gleaned from the registration cards reveals that many of those attending our worship service have their church membership elsewhere. To a great extent, our church membership at Clarendon is composed of people employed by the federal government. They represent many branches of the government and hail from nearly every state in the Union.

"Temporary" Residence

Due to transfers effected by certain branches of the government, there is a proportionately high turn over in our church membership. Through our extensive visitation program it has been

James E. Williams, Chairman of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism, Clarendon Methodist Church, leads the Commission in devotions prior to their regular meeting. The secretary of the Commission, Harlow Hoskins, sits at the table.

A group of new members being received into the fellowship of the church by Dr. J. L. Robertson, pastor. He is presenting them a membership folder which was prepared by the Commission on Membership and Evangelism. Membership transfers are urged to keep persons active.

established that many of those who attend our worship services at Clarendon regard their residence in the community as "temporary," even though they may have lived here for months. In a few cases, some have been in residence in Arlington for years.

It is as much a concern of our Commission on Membership and Evangelism to urge these "visiting" (mostly Methodist) members to transfer their church letter to Clarendon Methodist Church as it is to bring unchurched persons in our community to a commitment to the Christian life and church membership. Usually, all that is required to accomplish membership transfer is to get the prospect's signature on a commitment card. With the additional information furnished by the visitation team, our church secretary writes for the church letter and usually obtains it by return mail. Some of these formerly inactive members are now active in our church's evangelistic endeavors.

Neighborhood Groups

In addition to our church's visitation program, our Commission on Membership and Evangelism is organizing our church into neighborhood groups. The main purpose is to unite our church membership, thereby giving the individual members more of a feeling of belonging to a working organization as well as providing the church staff with a method of keeping in closer contact with each member. A captain, placed in charge of each group, contacts each family once a month. This also serves as a ready means of quickly discovering and contacting new people who move into our area.

In addition to this local program of evangelism, our church endeavors to participate in all programs of the District, the Conference, and the Area.

Every member of our Commission on Membership and Evangelism is fully and faithfully attempting to discharge his or her responsibility in an attitude and spirit of service, devotion, and dedication. It is enriching the lives of everyone engaged in the work. It is likewise keeping the evangelistic spirit alive in our congregation the year around.

We regard evangelism as a layman's job. We have taken Christ as our model. Our message is that in accepting Him and working for Him, there is a good life—a satisfactory life. Toward that end, pooling our experiences would seem to be an effective way to create "evangelistic churches that will be a real force for Christ and for evangelism."

Great Summer Conferences on Evangelism!

WHERE?

Chicago Area	*Des Plaines, Illinois*	July 6, 7, 8
Northeastern Jurisdiction	*Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa.*	July 9-14
South Central Jurisdiction	*Mt. Sequoyah, Ark.*	July 28-Aug. 3
Ohio Area	*Lakeside, Ohio*	Aug. 5-12
Southeastern Jurisdiction	*Lake Junaluska, N. C.*	Aug. 19-26

WHY?

- **To deepen personal faith and religious experience.**
- **To exchange evangelistic "know-how" and to strengthen the program in the home church.**

These are conferences on evangelism in the local church. Primarily for leaders in the local church program of evangelism—especially the chairman and members of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism.

Each part of each conference is designed to contribute to the spiritual and intellectual integrity of the local church program of evangelism and its leadership. Informal conferences with the leaders and general "shop-talk" among the delegates will add to the total impact of these programs.

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The General Board of Evangelism
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A Way of Evangelism

A layman answers the question, "Which Way? What Next in Evangelism?"

You ask, "Which Way? What Next in Evangelism?" I fear there is no easy answer to this important question. As Lay Leader of the East District of the Baltimore Conference we, too, have encountered some churches that are

Icily regular,
Splendidly null.

In fact, one or two of our churches seem already to have acquired

Death in perfection,
Nothing more.

You state that there is only one way to go in evangelism —Forward. True, but one cannot help wondering if perhaps at this point we should not first tarry—tarry until we shall have been "clothed with power from on high." Tarry until we have searched our hearts again, until something of the Christ's passion for people shall have found its way into our innermost selves. Tarry until there builds up within us an urge which will not be denied, an urge to help "capture this planet for the Master." Tarry until that "power from on high" shall have found lodgment within our souls.

Profound Meaning

There are two much-sung spirituals which seem to epitomize evangelism. Their very simplicity reveals a profundity of meaning couched in simple words.

The first is "I want to be like Jesus in my heart." To be even just a little bit like the Christ within our hearts must result in some of that passion for people which appeared always to dominate His thinking.

The second is "I want you to know my Jesus." After having come to know Him, how can we ever again be complacent until all the nations of the world shall come to know and love Him?

Somehow, Mr. Editor, we cannot but feel that the future of the whole world is going to depend upon the sincerity and depth of evangelistic spirit within the followers of the Christ, made manifest within His organized Church.

In the struggle for the minds of men we have a definite and final answer within our grasp. Unless we can convince the world that it is "Christ or chaos," it is surely going to be chaos—and that in the not very distant future.

Should we not pause again and wait for that "power from on high" so that we will not just be talking evangelism, but have become evangels?

Surely, the Holy Spirit cannot be denied when presented humbly and lovingly by Christ's own followers.

by

Hamilton A. Hooper

Lay Leader, Baltimore East District

Baltimore Annual Conference

Baltimore, Maryland

Yes, Pastor

THE UPPER ROOM DOES Pay for Itself

By Harold J. Rowley
Pastor, The Methodist Church
Houlton, Maine

Harold J. Rowley, pastor, is shown in the pulpit of The Methodist Church, Houlton, Maine, where the Parish Plan for distributing *The Upper Room* pays for itself and contributes a great ministry.

"What do you mean when you say, 'THE UPPER ROOM pays for itself'? Someone has to finance it."

The question was from a brother pastor who was revisiting his old field and had discovered that we in Houlton had adopted the policy of mailing THE UPPER ROOM to each home in our parish.

I replied to his question by saying, "True, someone has to finance it; someone has to mail it; but I still say it pays for itself."

We carry the cost of THE UPPER ROOM on our current account, and our Commission on Membership and Evangelism tends to the mailing chore. But let me give you just two incidents to show what I mean when I say I am convinced it pays for itself.

Cannot Miss a Morning

As I shook hands at the door following the church service a few Sundays ago, a young woman who regularly supports our church handed me an envelope and said, "This is a bit extra for the church." When I opened it, I found fifty dollars. Her work, as a waitress at a nationally known sportsman's camp, prevents her from being in church more than one Sunday a month. When I contacted her later and asked to what part of the work she wanted to direct her special gift, she replied, "Use it where it is needed most. I appreciate more and more what the church is doing, I will be adding more a little later." Then in the same breath she added, "Can you arrange to have my copy of THE UPPER ROOM mailed to the camp? I do not want to miss a single morning's devotion."

Members of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism of The Methodist Church, in Houlton, Maine, prepare copies of *The Upper Room* to mail each family in the church, prospective members and those homes touched by the church school or other groups in the congregation.

A Shut-in Gets a Lift

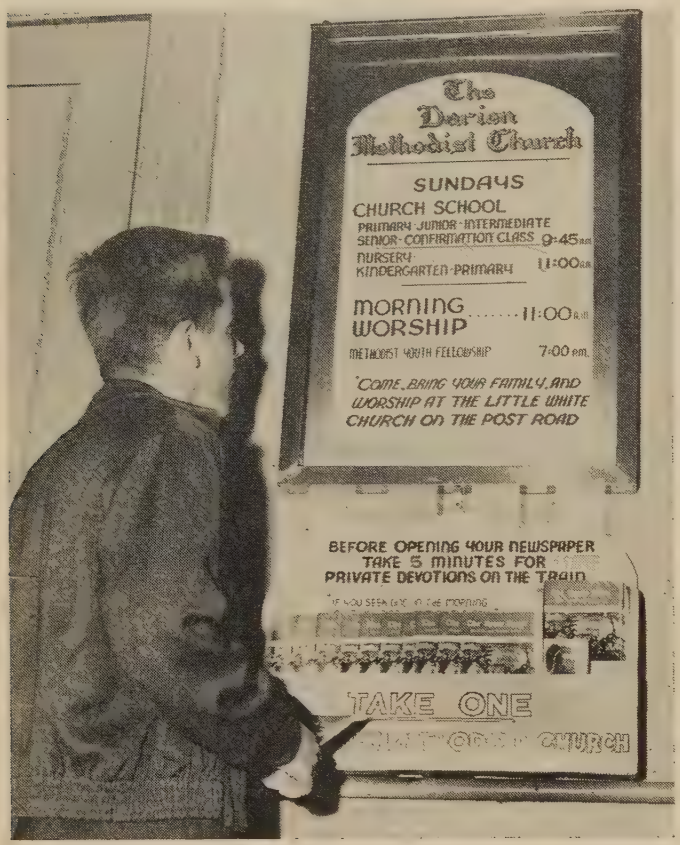
The second incident I want to tell you about started at my front door the week before Easter. A man with an obvious French accent handed me an envelope, saying, "My Missus and I want your church to have this. Because I have a heart condition and my wife cannot walk, we are not able to attend any church. But we want to give your church something because you help us." (The envelope contained $10, and within a few months they made it $25.) Their names had been placed on our mailing list because the previous winter one of our aged members had stayed at their house and received her regular copies of THE UPPER ROOM as a shut-in. When she left their home, she told us how much help they seemed to receive from reading her copies of THE UPPER ROOM and asked that we send them a copy each issue.

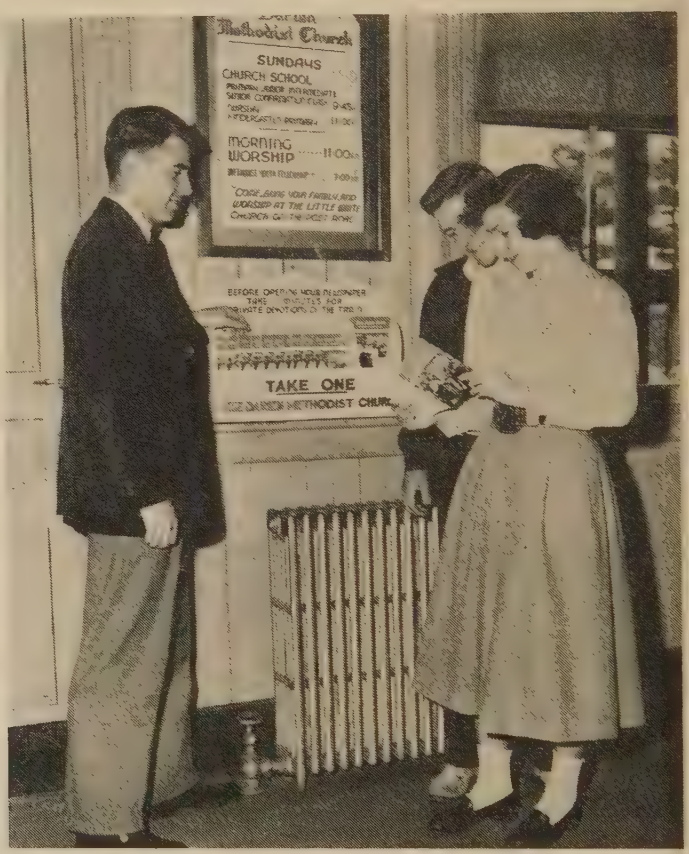
When I visited the home a few days after the man had called at my door, I found on the hall table the Bible, some old copies of THE UPPER ROOM and the current issue open to the reading for the day. What a need had been answered by THE UPPER ROOM in this household! And, to my brother preacher who asked how it paid for itself, remember the twenty-five dollars had come into our church from this one home which was on the mailing list—by accident.

Yes, THE UPPER ROOM pays for itself as it offers a great ministry.

Commuters Stop, Look—And Respond

Young People Take Christ Into the Railway Station


The Darien Methodist Church
SUNDAYS
CHURCH SCHOOL
PRIMARY · JUNIOR · INTERMEDIATE
SENIOR · CONFIRMATION CLASS 9:45
NURSERY
KINDERGARTEN · PRIMARY 11:00
MORNING WORSHIP 11:00
METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP 7:00 p.m.
"COME, BRING YOUR FAMILY, AND WORSHIP AT THE LITTLE WHITE CHURCH ON THE POST ROAD
BEFORE OPENING YOUR NEWSPAPER TAKE 5 MINUTES FOR PRIVATE DEVOTIONS ON THE TRAIN
TAKE ONE



By M. Lawrence Snow
Pastor, Darien Methodist Church
Darien, Connecticut

How powerful is the ministry of the printed word!

In November, 1955, our church signed a contract with Transportation Displays, Incorporated, to maintain a literature rack and panel in the Darien Railroad station on the New York and New Haven Railroad. The contract was for one year with a ten dollar per month rental.

Into the rack were placed copies of THE UPPER ROOM, pamphlets, and tracts which were paid for by our Methodist Youth Fellowship and given to the travelers free of charge.

Darien is a town of New York commuters, and the railroad is doing a heavy business. It is a 45-minute to an hour ride into Grand Central Station. The little sign over the rack reads: Before opening your newspaper, take five minutes for morning devotions.

Complete Sellout

THE UPPER ROOMS just melted away! The young people were simply delighted. Over two thousand pieces of literature were taken in the first three months.

This service has caused much comment in our section of the country. The New York Area Public Relations brochure carried it as a news item which brought us many telephone calls, telegrams, and letters. Others wished to sponsor such a project.

It's People Who Count

Needless to say, the wonderful responses from people who have been blessed by this ministry are the supreme joy from this new venture in our church. We are having people come into our membership who tell us they read our literature and want to become a part of our church family. Many had let the pressure of life change their early church habits. A few minutes of early morning devotions had made them remember and long to return to a church home.

In a number of instances men who never knew God have been converted and are coming into our fellowship. It is a glorious experience as these many opportunities for service open for us.

Indeed, we find the printed ministry is powerful as youth leads us into this new path of adventure for the Master.

—Philip Gendreau

LOOKING AHEAD IN EVANGELISM OF YOUNG PEOPLE

by Harold W. Ewing

Director of the Youth Department
Division of the Local Church
General Board of Education
The Methodist Church

THIS article affords me an opportunity which I have eagerly anticipated, namely, to express publicly what I have many times said privately regarding our deep appreciation for the close cooperative relationship which exists between the entire staff of the General Board of Evangelism and the Youth Department of our General Board of Education. It would be impossible for me to enumerate all the ways in which this cooperation is expressed. I believe that during the year almost every member of the Board of Evangelism staff has been engaged in some kind of activity directly related to the ongoing program of youth work in The Methodist Church. It is a privilege to be associated in this enterprise which brings together these two great Boards of our Church which are so deeply and vitally concerned with the work of the local church and to watch as they find increasing areas for cooperative endeavor.

During the past four years The Methodist Church has been operating under a mandate from the General Conference to "place a special emphasis during the quadrennium 1952-56 upon developing, improving, and extending its youth program and upon reaching increased numbers of youth for the Christian life and membership in the church."

Youth Evangelism

The Youth Department of the General Board of Education has been working in close cooperation with the General Board of Evangelism to give leadership to young people as they seek to win other youth for Christ. At the outset of the quadrennium, in August of 1952, more than 200 youth and adult workers with youth gathered at Purdue University to lay the foundations for the program which has become the Youth Emphasis. In that meeting the young people themselves, in work groups and discussion groups, hammered out the program which later was given body and substance and became the program to which we refer as the Youth Emphasis. In those memorable hard-working days the young people, time and time again, came back to the fact that they wanted to reach the unchurched young people across the United States. In their words, "Let us capture youth everywhere with the message of Christ." At the very heart of the Youth Emphasis was placed a strong emphasis upon the need to win youth to Christ.

Through helping youth to make a direct personal witness through the Christian Witness Mission, through establishing new MYFs where no MYFs existed, through reactivating MYFs through spiritual life retreats, through lifting the whole level of youth work in The Methodist Church, tremendous strides forward have been taken. While there had been a loss of nearly 23,000 young people in a period of five years prior to 1952, in the last 36 months

the tide definitely has been turned from loss to gain.

We are happy to report that since 1952 more than 118,000 new young people have been added to the rolls of the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

We are not concerned about the change of statistical data on a graph. However, we are vitally concerned that The Methodist Church now has the opportunity of working creatively with 118,000 individual young people whom it was not contacting 30 months ago.

This is the significant advance—an advance that represents an increase of approximately 10 per cent in the membership of the Methodist Youth Fellowship in three years. We are convinced that these gains are being conserved at the present time and that we will continue to grow in the months that are immediately ahead.

The Evangel

However, the most significant thing that has happened during these recent months of the Youth Emphasis is an intangible something that cannot be measured on a graph, nor reported statistically in an annual report. This is the growing awareness upon the part of the young people who are active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship of their basic responsibility to carry the evangel of Christ to the entire culture of our modern day.

I am certain that you would have been as greatly thrilled as were we who are on the Youth Emphasis Advisory Committee when we met recently in Chicago and heard five of the officers of the National Methodist Youth Fellowship Commission testify to their own personal faith and the need for vitalizing the program of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. The young people were alert and committed to a sense of responsibility for making their faith active in every area of their experience. It is thrilling to watch young people as they become active evangelists for Christ in the new day.

Need for Reaching Youth Still Exists

As significant as have been the achievements of the past four years, we must not feel that the job is completed. There is a tremendous responsibility still before the Church aggressively to move forward to reach the young people outside the Church.

The youth population of America still grows by leaps and bounds and will be growing for many years to come. America has never seen a time when as many persons have grown into the youth age range as in these days through which we are now passing. From the sheer standpoint of taking care of the junior children who are becoming youth at the age of twelve, The Methodist Church has a rapidly mounting responsibility each year.

While in 1950, there were 2,350,000 children who turned twelve years of age and automatically became members of the youth age range in our country, in 1960, just four years hence, more than 3½ million children will turn twelve years of age in a single year. This means that for every five children who became intermediates in your community in 1950, there will be seven children becoming intermediates in 1960. The Church must prepare to minister to this growing group of young people in the youth age range in our population or we will fail, not only the homes and the country, but also our God.

Unchurched Youth

A gain of 118,000 young people since 1952 is an impressive gain. And yet we must now allow ourselves to rest upon this kind of significant advance while we know that the basic situation relative to the unchurched young people still exists. In short, there are still three young people outside the Church for every young person inside the Church. Statistical studies that have been made and the estimates based upon them indicate that three-fourths of the young people in America still live their lives, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks out of the year, without thought of the Church and without taking any part in the creative, dynamic program which is available for them within the synagogue, cathedral, or parish church. While we appreciate the gains that have been made, while many Methodist churches are actually bulging at the seams as they seek to provide for the growing number of young people within their own church fellowship, we must seek to reach this large group who do not have the opportunity of sharing in the vital fellowship of Christian youth, who do not have the stabilizing power of a faith in God, nor the central focus for their lives of dedication to Christ.

Moral Atmosphere

The need for reaching youth still exists. The moral atmosphere of the average community in America in which youth are being reared is certainly not one which is conducive to moral Christian living. You have but to read the newspaper from the average American community to realize that the adults

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by Lawrence L. Lacour

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of the community have failed to provide for young people a moral atmosphere which is conducive to wholesome, happy growth.

Teen-Age Delinquency

Teen-age delinquency still shocks our land. And the average community seems lost to know what to do about it. As we look more critically at the total community picture, realizing that it is not juvenile delinquency which plagues the community but general community-wide adult delinquency; when we know that the young people have never known a "normal" war-free year in their lives; when we stop to think of the atmosphere of fear and insecurity which surrounds them—we wonder if they could not be justified in feeling that they live in a crazy, mixed-up world! Arnold Toynbee is reported as having commented recently that due to the tremendous strides which science has taken in the atom, jet-propelled age, the average youth will encounter more change and progress during his lifetime than has taken place in a thousand preceding years. The Methodist Church needs to use daring and imagination in helping the young people to find new and effective ways of extending the Christian fellowship of the Church youth group into the entire community to help the young people find happy, wholesome ways of living.

The Need to Belong

Sociologists, looking at the phenomenon which we call adolescence, describe it as the state in which young persons are teetering on the edge of adulthood. They are seeking to achieve adult status, longing for independence, wanting to shake off the actual or fancied restraints of the adult culture. In short, they want to belong to a group of their own age, to be recognized by that group, and to achieve a sense of significance among their own peers.

The Church has long recognized this need and natural desire upon the part of young people. Through the creative program of the Methodist Youth Fellowship such a youth group exists within the Church. If The Methodist Church would serve the youth of this generation, it must continue to provide a program which will meet the normal and natural craving upon the part of the teen-age community and aggressively seek to relate the young people to a fellowship of their "peer group" which will be dynamic and creative and help them to find positive patterns of moral living.

In looking ahead to conserve the gains which have been made in the youth program during the years of the Youth Emphasis and to move the Methodist Youth Fellowship into even more creative areas of spiritual experience, much thought has been given to planning by youth who are responsible leaders of the Church-wide youth movement of The Methodist Church and the adults who counsel with them. In this planning the major concern has been to find ways of enriching and strengthening the Methodist Youth Fellowship in the local church. This process of planning is a continuous one.

Redemptive Fellowship

The young people are eager to be recognized as a part of the total Church. During these months of planning the young people have sought to articulate the deepest sense of concern relative to their Church. There has been emerging a conviction upon their part that the Methodist Youth Fellowship must focus its thinking and action in terms of its unique function as a "redemptive fellowship" as a part of the body of Christ in the modern world.

Christian Education Is Evangelistic

It is against this background of renewed awareness of the nature of the Church that the young people of The Methodist Church are moving ahead aggressively in a program of evangelism. The program of Christian education through the Methodist Youth Fellowship has a deep and fundamental concern for evangelism, and a major share of its task is in this important aspect of Christian experience. Christian education is a dynamic, life-changing process. At the very heart of Christian education is a transformation of individual purpose and will to do the will of God through Christ.

The goal of Christian education is the complete volitional surrender of the individual will to the will of God, resulting in the divine fulfilment and transformation of life. When religious education is truly Christian, it is basically evangelistic. It seeks to enlist youth for Christ and His Church. That the church school has been effective in this evangelistic program is attested by the fact that out of the approximately five million new members who joined the Church between 1943 and 1953, three million came through the church school.

Meeting All Needs of Youth

The program of the Methodist Youth Fellowship is a program that seeks to meet all the needs of the young person. There is no period in life when there are as many pressures and as many needs as in the period of youth. Important among these needs is the need for religious counsel and guidance and the need for experience which will lead them to dedication and decision.

If the Church is to minister to the total life of the young people of this generation, it is important that evangelism be included in the context of a program that seeks to meet all the needs of the young people. Thus, the very heart and core of the program of the Methodist Youth Fellowship is a growing evangelistic concern that seeks, not only to reach additional young people in the community, but also to keep the evangel real to the young people who are now members of the Methodist Youth Fellowship.

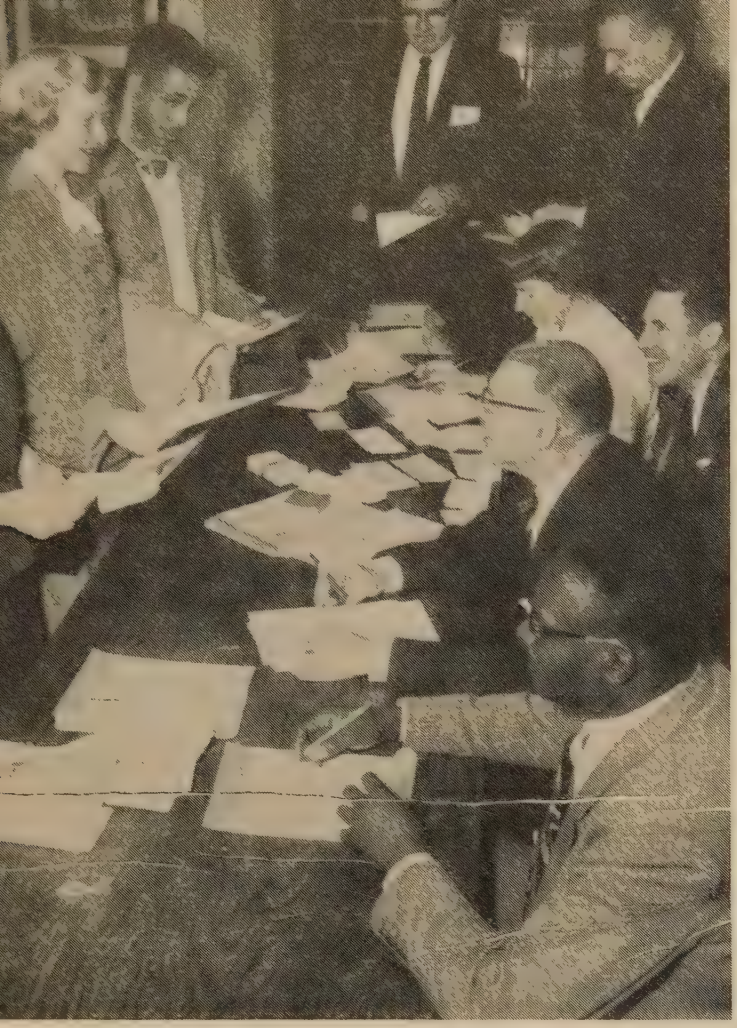
Understanding Christian Faith

As we plan ahead with young people, there is need for supporting evangelism with an understanding of the basis of the Christian faith. Here evangelism and education walk hand in hand. It is difficult for young people to sustain a religious decision which is not undergirded by a growing knowledge of the Bible, an awareness of the foundation of their faith and belief, an understanding of theological concepts, and a deepening devotional life.

Many Methodist young people who have moved through the Youth Fellowship into the Student Movement report that as they confront young people of other faiths they find these young people thoroughly conversant with the foundation of their respective faiths, while they themselves are at a loss to know precisely what is the content of their own faith. The task of evangelism is not completed with recruitment and decision. It must be joined with a process helping the convert to ground his faith firmly, making it well balanced in the mystical experience and the intellectual content.

Concern

Far too frequently youth and adults observe that one of the reasons that the young people of the Methodist Youth Fellowship have not more evangelistic zeal is that they do not have a deep and genuine concern to reach the youth who are outside the Church. If the program of evangelism among young people is to move forward to bring Christ to the unchurched young people, there is need for developing within the ranks of the young people, as well as the entire Church, a deep and vital concern to move out and carry the gospel to the unchurched.



Youth and adult leaders from fifteen states come to Evanston for Youth Evangelistic Mission. Ann Mintner and Rose Sherhouse, of Atlanta, and Curtis Jackson, of Indianapolis, check with assignment committee. At the table: Marlyn Clark, Leslie J. Ross, Roy Bond, and J. B. Brown.

Leadership for the Mission included: First row, Harold W. Ewing, Nashville; Marlyn Clark, Chicago; Merrill Powers, DeKalb; Howard Ellis, Nashville. Second row, Ken Carder, Paul W. Grimes, Emerson Colaw, and Sumpter J. Riley, Chicago.

Breakfast Club guests of Don McNeil included William H. Hall, Missouri; Jane Smith, Bunkie, Louisiana; and William Peckham Skokie, Illinois.

DO IT YOURSELF

GALOSHES and woolen gloves were the rule as more than 750 Methodist young people planned and shared in a unique and practical project of evangelism—the Regional Christian Witness Mission in Greater Chicago during the week end of February 10-14. The young people carried the do-it-yourself theme to a new high in their efforts to recruit new members for the Christian life and faith. Nearly a thousand commitments out of fifteen hundred personal invitations and contacts indicated that young people were taking seriously their mission of preaching the gospel to other high schoolers.

The Mission, one of three regional Methodist Youth Fellowship projects sponsored jointly by the Board of Education and the Board of Evangelism of The Methodist Church, brought together 120 youth and adults from sixteen states—Minnesota to Florida through Louisiana and Nebraska.

Defying a sudden flury of snow that piled up to more than a foot in Chicago's South Side, teen-agers slugged it out in congested urban neighborhoods behind the yards and in Chicago's congested areas as well as rural and suburban communities.

More than six months' planning went into the Mission, which was a Pilot Mission for 48 churches of the Rock River and Lexington Conferences. Harold W. Ewing, Director of the Youth Department of the Division of the Local Church of The Methodist Church, and Howard Ellis, Director of the Cooperative Department of Youth Evangelism, were national staff resource persons. The project was administered by a Chicago committee headed by Dr. Merrill Powers, Joliet-Dixon District Superintendent; Emerson Colaw, pastor of Edison Park Methodist Church, Chicago; and the MYF Council.

Youth and adults were assigned to churches across racial and jurisdictional lines, as Negro youth were invited to witness in suburban communities and white youth called in underprivileged Negro flats on Chicago's South Side.

"Before you go in to talk to anyone, talk to his Father—and yours." Prayer becomes real for youth as they pray for and with others.

TEEN MISSION

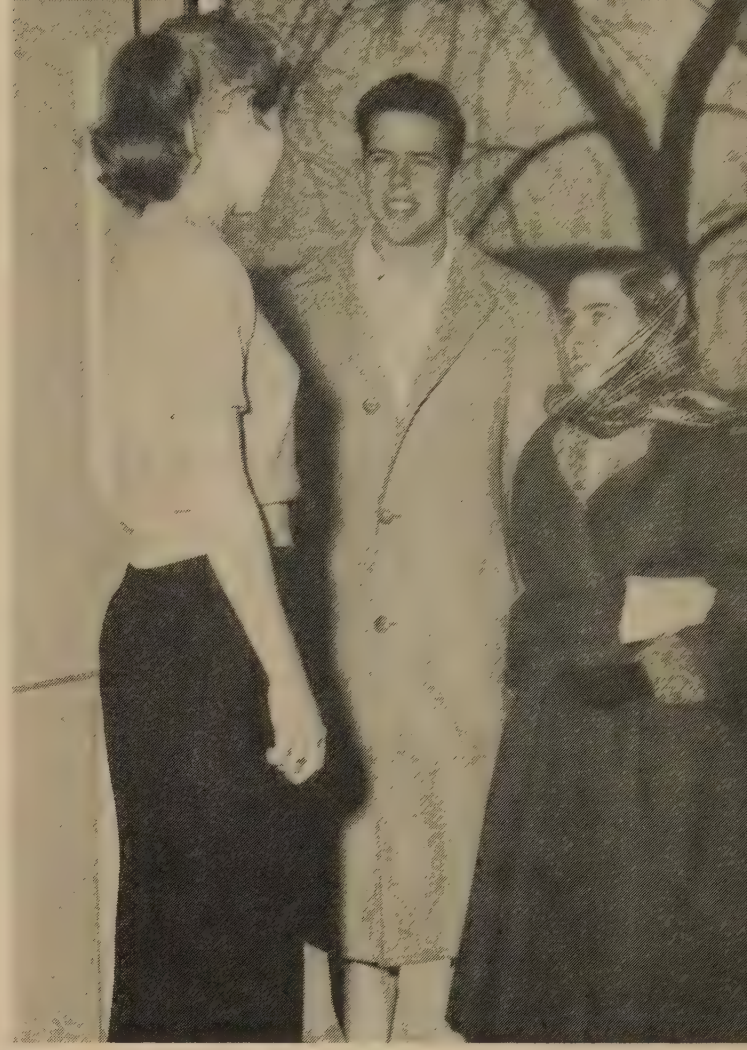
Orientation and training sessions for 250 guest and host participants got the ball rolling Friday in a series of group coaching sessions under the direction of Wayne Leighty, Conference Executive Secretary; Merrill Powers; Robert Thornburg, District Director of the Northern District; and Eugene Golay, Leslie J. Ross, Howard Ellis, and Harold W. Ewing of the national staff.

First Methodist Church, Evanston, was host to the one-day training and orientation session. The do-it-yourself Youth Mission was followed by a two-day workshop in youth evangelism. A significant new trend in the Christian Witness Movement, according to workshop leaders, is the development of a strategy for building bonds between the young people in the Church and those outside the Church. Known as "Operation Fellowship," the plan, given a trial run in Chicago-land and Joliet-Dixon churches, was developed further by workshop groups. The emphasis on "Come-As-You-Are" Parties and informal contacts and cultivation of prospective members is hailed as a significant new step in the efforts to relate teen-agers to a meaningful Christian fellowship.

Speakers at the conference and workshop sessions included Emerson Colaw; Dr. Sumpter M. Riley, Jr., Chicago District Superintendent; and Jesse Roberts, host pastor of the Hemenway Methodist Church, Evanston, where workshop sessions were held Monday and Tuesday.

Four of the workshop guests appeared on Don McNeil's Breakfast Club program from the Sherman Hotel.

A new record for a Week-End Mission was set in suburban Skokie's Central Methodist Church, where 97 commitments were recorded by the teen-age evangelists. A closing commitment service Sunday night featured a get acquainted with the Methodist Youth Fellowship program for parents. Bill Peckham, Director of Youth Work for Central Church and a student at Garrett Biblical Institute, reports that much of the success of the Mission is attributed to a Come-As-You-Are Party sprung as a secret by the MYF Council.



Bill Copanas, of St. Louis, and Arlene Atwood, of Central Methodist Church, Skokie, Illinois, team up for a call on one of the 185 prospective youth in the fast-growing suburb. Prospects become persons as youth talk and witness in youth-to-youth evangelism.

Skokie youth amaze themselves with record of commitments and new interest in Youth Fellowship. Bill Peckham, Director of Youth Work, and Howard Ellis, guest leader, receive reports from Dorothy Platt, Program Area Chairman of Christian Witness.

Young Writer Learns Of Meditation's Scope Through Scotch Inquiry

User of THE UPPER ROOM sometime wish they knew something about the person who prepared some particular day's meditation which has been especially meaningful to them. One may ponder upon the writer's age, circumstance or experience which brought about his writing.

The following letter was received from a mother in Wisconsin:

"My son, who has just reached the age of 22 and is a student in a theological seminary, was privileged to write the meditation for one day in THE UPPER ROOM. He has just received a letter from a gentleman and his wife in Glasgow, Scotland, saying they had read and reread this meditation and received so much help from it that they were compelled to write him. This made my son keenly aware that truly he led millions around the world in their devotions on that one day."

His Strength Is Sufficient

The young student's meditation based on the scripture, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," reads in part:

> Alone on a park bench in a large city sat a young man. He was upset because he was alone in that strange city. Suddenly, however, a warmth of contentment came over him as he thought about God's presence and the importance of some great Biblical truths.
>
> He realized that he was alive in God's world, and that others, like himself, were faced with similar new experiences. He found that each day should be lived to its fullest, and that one should not be anxious about tomorrow. He experienced the fact that through prayer God renews our strength to conquer new problems of life.
>
> Our lonely condition may be caused by such experiences as being away from home, entering college, being in the hospital, or in the armed forces. In spite of what the condition may be, the fact is that each day can only be lived once. Therefore, for its fullest benefit, one should face it with Christ and live it in His strength and spirit.

This meditation by one so young was meaningful to the mature couple in Scotland, who were thoughtful enough to say so.

* * * *

Everyone Needs a Copy

Parents have found it to be beneficial for each member of the family to have in their hands a copy of THE UPPER ROOM during family worship.

There may be a rotation each day with one person reading the scriptural passage, another the scriptural reference which is printed in THE UPPER ROOM, and a third reading the meditation, with all the family joining in the prayer and Thought for the Day.

A book before each one, causes attention to be focused upon what is being read and is more meaningful.

Fisherman for Christ Found Busy in Georgia Super Market

J. E. Vanlandingham, a merchant in Wrightsville, Georgia, hands a copy of *The Upper Room* to Mrs. Joe Jackson of Donovan, Georgia. Mr. Vanlandingham gives a copy to all his customers who promise to read it.

Here's a Good Idea Give It a Try Sunday

A simple device which will enhance Sunday Morning Worship, express friendliness, register the visitors, and distribute THE UPPER ROOM has been suggested by J. Lester McGee, minister of the Quayle Memorial Methodist Church in Kansas City, Kansas.

Card Inserted

A card is inserted in every hymnal at the number of the first hymn with the words "Good Morning" sticking out the top. Boy Scouts working on God and Country Awards take turns in placing them each Sunday for both services.

Following the gracious greeting on the card there is the request, "If you are a visitor, write your name and address here and hand to an usher. We will send you a copy of THE UPPER ROOM, the world's most widely used devotional guide, as a token of our appreciation."

* * * *

The Upper Room in Braille

The Blind Shall Read His Word

A copy of THE UPPER ROOM in Braille is going as a gift from a class in the Junior Department of the church school in Wiener, Arkansas, whose teacher is Mrs. Guy French.

This class composed of boys and girls nine to eleven years old, as a result of some Bible lessons on Jesus healing the blind, asked the Fellowship Department of THE UPPER ROOM to choose some needy blind person to be the beneficiary of their gift.

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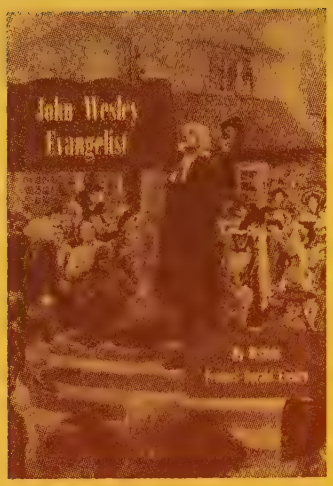

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CUBA: *Land of Christian Opportunity*

by James W. Sells

Executive Secretary

Southeastern Jurisdictional Council

THE sixth "Cruzada Evangelistica International" to Cuba, held this winter under the leadership of Bishop John W. Branscomb, resident Bishop of the Florida and Cuba Conferences, Harry Denman, Executive Secretary of the General Board of Evangelism, and James E. Ellis, Secretary for Latin America of the Board of Missions, resulted in 2,898 first decisions, with 152 persons received on profession of faith. There was a total attendance of 67,868 in the 858 preaching services. Participating in this preaching mission to Cuba were approximately 100 Methodist ministers and five or six laymen.

Traveling Interpreter

It was my privilege to act as a traveling interpreter of this mission—not to interpret the mission to the missioners, but to seek to see what is happening in Cuba and to interpret this work to others who are interested. For Cuba, in the Plan of Union, became a part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and is thus a part of American Methodism. However, while the Cuba Conference is a part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and under the episcopal supervision of the resident Bishop of the Jacksonville Area, Cuba itself is a mission field and is under the direction of the secretaries of Latin America of the Board of World Missions and the Woman's Division of Christian Service.

Too much praise cannot be given to those who envisioned these Cuba preaching missions. Originating with Bishop Roy Hunter Short's administration of the work in Florida and Cuba, they have continued under the dynamic leadership of Bishop Branscomb. Harry Denman, of the General Board of Evangelism, has had enthusiastic cooperation in all the planning of the missions.

Recognition must also be given to the capable leadership of the District Superintendents of the Cuba Conference, the resident missionaries, and the pastors who made the plans, opened the doors, and worked unfailingly at the task. If any ministers thought they were going to Cuba for a vacation, the training sessions at Trinity Church, Miami, and the consistent labors of the pastors and missionaries soon disabused them of this idea.

Two by two the ministers were sent to the assigned churches. They lived with the Cuban preachers, with members of the local churches, or with the missionaries.

Shown above are the participants in the 1956 Evangelistic Mission to Cuba.

For 10 days I journeyed with Bishop Branscomb, visiting the work of Methodism in Cuba. We traveled by plane, by car, by jeep, by foot. The Bishop dedicated a parsonage and three churches, inspected new buildings under construction, visited sites where new work will soon be opened, preached outdoors under the stars in the slums of a city where a new work could be opened if a worker could be found, and tirelessly preached and called mourners and won people to Christ.

Itinerary

Here is a roll call of his itinerary: From Miami to Havana; from Havana to Cienfuegos; then to Santa Clara; then, by long plane flight, to Camaguey; from there to Holguin; to Preston; to Santiago de Cuba; to Guantanamo; back to Havana. From there he went to the western end of the island for the dedication of a church, and I was assigned to visit the seminary at Mantanzas.

At each of these major stops we were immediately driven, either by the missionary or by the local pastor, to visit the churches, the new works that are being opened, the churches that are being built, and the places where dreams must be brought to pass.

From my notebook I lift these memo-

randa . . . each written hastily and jotted down as a spur to memory . . . and share them in order that you might catch the flavor of the romance that is Methodism in Cuba.

In Cienfuegos, the District Superintendent, Louis Diaz de Arce, who is also pastor of the local church, and the Rev. and Mrs. John Stroud, missionaries, are working on a real larger parish. Even though they have not given it that name, their basic philosophy is that of the larger parish. The church in the town of Cienfuegos and the smaller missions and churches are cooperating in developing outpost preaching places that are served by student preachers, local preachers, and lay workers. (This plan is also being followed with great success by Dr. Garfield Evans at Holguin.)

In Cienfuegos there are now eight points on the circuit, in addition to the town church. About 40 lay workers go out to the various missions. Here, in the past three years, eight new missions have been opened. Thirty communities have been reported where new chapels, or missions, could be established if workers and support were available.

Unchurched Communities

Many (and this really should be several hundred or, perhaps, a thousand) communities have no churches, no chapels, nor missions of any kind. The idea that the Roman Catholic Church serves these outlying communities with an adequate ministry is entirely unsound. It is true that the Roman Catholic Church has become alarmed at the growth and influence of Protestantism and is opening new chapels in many communities. However, some I saw were merely chapels without the services of a resident priest. I was told that, in many instances, the priest came only to hold services at very infrequent intervals. Methodism's opportunity in Cuba, as it seemed to me, is limited only by manpower, money, and imagination.

Valuable Contribution

One of Methodism's most valuable contributions to the life of Cuba is in and through the schools the Church has established. The members of the Woman's Society of Christian Service have a right to be filled with pride over the schools they maintain and support. Cleanliness, friendliness, beauty, and a Christian spirit of service are dominant.

Do they pay? Dr. Angel E. Fuster, now pastor at Santa Clara and member of the 1952 General Conference, stood on the campus of Eliza Bowman Collegio and showed me the classroom where he saw his first Bible, where he was introduced to Christ, and where he became a Christian. Now, at Santa Clara, in a spacious and commodious building hard by the church and parsonage, Dr. Fuster has established a parochial school for the members of his church and the people of his city. His administration of that school and pastorate are tokens of the results obtained by missions at work. He took us out to the new University that the Republic of Cuba is building in Santa Clara. It is modern beyond imagination, beautiful to see, and promises much for the future of Cuba.

Missionaries deal with miracles. Victor Rankin, District Superintendent and pastor at Camaguey, has opened a new mission that in size resembles a mustard seed planted in a dark and gloomy soil. For the sewers run open, and life is not too inviting at the best. Yet, here is the smallest Methodist church . . . in size of building only . . . that I have ever seen. It was started in a cottage much smaller and less pretentious. The pastor is a local preacher, a converted businessman who even now is working for the local municipal light company. Senor Antonio Lopez, artist that he is, makes plaster busts of John Wesley as an interpretation of his Christian faith and works as pastor as his method of making a Christian witness.

Imagination and Daring

Missionaries are not only workers with miracles, but they are men of imagination and daring. Witness the work of one of the oldest missionaries in Cuba, Dr. Garfield Evans, now at Holguin. Dr. Evans has not only opened a clinic, a dispensary, and a dentist's office in Holguin, where, on "Squatters Hill," is poverty of the direst kind, but he has also secured the services of Christian physicians to man the clinic as their contribution to the welfare of the people. District Superintendent, pastor, and promoter of clinics, Dr. Evans also operates a larger parish ministry manned by young high-school candidates for the ministry.

One of Bishop Branscomb's major highlights on this trip to Cuba was the dedication of the lovely chapel on the campus of the Agricultural and Industrial School at Preston. Gift of the Churchwells of Jacksonville and South Georgia, this chapel faces Nipe Bay. In place of the altar, there is a large ten-by-twelve-foot plate-glass window which gives a view of the Nipe Bay and the distant islands to form a worship center of peace and beauty. On a Sunday afternoon the chapel was crowded with students, visitors, officials of nearby municipalities, and officers of the

Bishop John W. Branscomb, Dr. James E. Ellis, and Miss Eulalia Cook speak to a group of Sunday school children on Miss Cook's charge. Miss Cook has pioneered in many rural communities.

Members of the preaching mission gather for the dedication of a parsonage at Aguada de Pasajeros. Editor Miguel Soto of *El Evangelistica Cubano*, the Cuban "Christian Advocate," takes a picture of the Bishop and group.

nearby United Fruit Company's "Central" who had come to attend the formal dedication. Music for the service was under the leadership of Miss Rochelle McClure, a native of Canton, Georgia. When Miss McClure retired from business, she moved to Cuba to invest her mature years in teaching music to the young Methodists of Cuba.

Under the leadership of Director Richard Milk and a most competent faculty, the Agricultural and Industrial School is now furnishing leadership for rural communities in Cuba and giving opportunities for Cuban young people to receive "terminal training" that will be most valuable to rural church life.

Rural Cuba has her great leaders among the women workers, too. For instance, Miss Eulalia Cook of Baguanos has pioneered in so many rural communities, and with such success, that in her 14 years in that area she has become an angel of mercy and an authority on rural work. She knows, and has demonstrated, the meaning of practical rural evangelism.

City Work

Not all Methodism in Cuba is small town or rural work. In the great city of Havana, Methodism is firmly entrenched. With the great new church at the University, with the Central Church downtown, and with the completion of the great new Leland Memorial Church at Candler College across the street from the Buenavista School in Havana, Methodism will have a firm base from which she can reach out to influence all of Cuba. Dr. Carl D. Stewart, pastor of Leland Memorial Church, is now engaged in raising funds to complete this church.

The members of the Sixth International Evangelistic Crusade met in Candler College for the final report session. Following a chapel service at the gymnasium—a service attended by hundreds of bright-faced students of Candler College and Buenavista School —the ministers met for a report session and a supper on the campus of the Buenavista School. They left for home by plane that night.

Among the many interesting and stimulating (and amazing) reports given were such as these: One man reported leading a young Buddhist couple into acknowledging the Christian faith and becoming candidates for church membership. Another reported the conversion of a picture show building into a church and the holding of a revival there. Still another reported the astounding experience of baptizing more than 100 babies during the week.

Reports

Full reports for the mission in Cuba were given as follows: There were 858 services held; 840 sermons preached; 5,881 visits made; 2,898 first decisions acknowledged; 152 received on profession of faith; 1,923 enrolled in preparatory classes, and a total of 67,868 persons in attendance at all the services.

The 100 ministers and laymen have returned to their homes. The reports have been made to their local churches. Most of that experience has become a memory. But, for the missionaries and preachers serving in Cuba, the work has hardly begun. Theirs is the task of training the new members, conserving the results of the mission, and establishing the new converts in the task.

Of this I am now confident. They are capable, qualified, willing, and so sacrificially in earnest that, led by the Spirit of Christ, they are daily attempting and succeeding in the impossible.

The District Superintendents of the Cuba Conference and Dr. Harry Denman are introduced to the members of the Crusade in Trinity Church, Miami, the day before they embark for Cuba.

Above, Dr. Garfield Evans and Dr. James E. Ellis and members of Dr. Evan's staff at the clinic at the church in Holguin. In addition to the clinic, Dr. Evans also operates a Protestant Book Store.

Below, in this home the Rev. Victor Rankin met with a group to organize a new church on Heaven Avenue and Holy Road.

Bishop John Branscomb shakes hands with the son of the man who gave the land for a new rural church on the Rev. Mr. John Stroud's Larger Parish. Mr. Stroud is at extreme left.

Dedication services at the Chapel in Preston. This building will serve as a chapel for the students of the Agricultural and Industrial School and as a church for the Methodists in Preston and nearby communities.

J. T. Seamands, Methodist missionary, Belgaum, India, meets with prayer group launching the Year of Prayer for 1956.

NEW LINKS

In the 1956 Prayer Chain in India

by J. T. Seamands
Methodist Mission
Belguam, India

The Prayer Life Movement in India is gaining momentum from day to day. So far more than 130 churches of various denominations have joined the Prayer Chain, and each day brings in an additional request or two for a date assignment.

Six seminary student bodies have each accepted a 24-Hour Vigil of Prayer. The American Methodist Church has decided to conduct a continuous Prayer Vigil during the four days of its centennial celebrations in Lucknow in October.

Arrangements are being made for new links of the chain to be forged in the various hill stations. One denomination recently wrote and asked for a block of 27 consecutive days for its churches to participate in the Prayer Vigils. One family (with many children) wrote and said they wanted a 24-Hour Vigil just for their own family members. One individual, an elderly shut-in lady, has accepted the assignment of praying by name each day for the church that is conducting the prayer chain for that particular day.

Spiritual Blessings

Reports coming in from the participating groups tell of many spiritual blessings as a result of the hours of prayer. At the final hour during one prayer chain, 85 people gathered together in a great service of praise and testimony. One man testified that he had gained victory over a habit that had defeated him for many years in his life. One woman told how she had been reconciled during the day to her father-in-law with whom she had not been on speaking terms for almost 15 years. Many others confessed neglect in their personal and family prayer life and expressed their determination to begin a new life of prayer and devotion.

After the Prayer Vigil in his church, one pastor wrote. "This was the first time in its 60-year history that this church ever had a 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. It was gratifying to see the whole congregation gathering together for the first and the final hours with a spirit of eagerness and expectancy. Many have expressed to me their unspeakable joy through this day of prayer. To some it was a new experience altogether. They were reborn into the prayer life this day, and we thanked God for the blessing received. I feel that the Holy Spirit has started His work of the Kingdom in this Church."

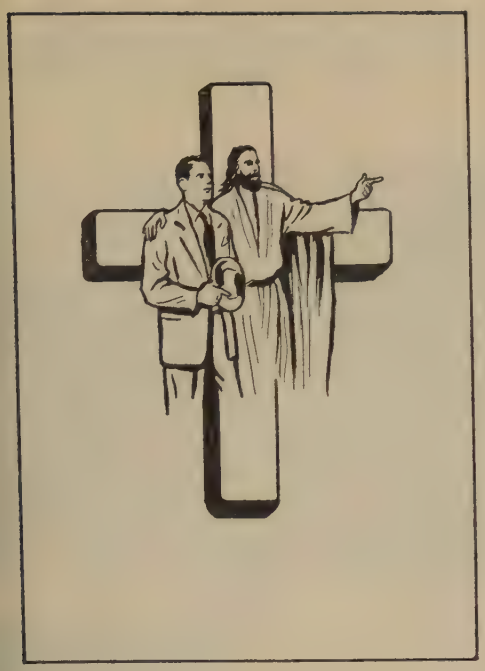
Successful Evangelistic Mission to Alaska

THE third cooperative Evangelistic Mission to the Alaska Mission Conference again proved to be an added incentive to what is now the most rapidly growing conference in the church. With the full cooperation of the National Board of Missions, eighteen pastors from across the nation went to the Alaskan Church, February 26 to March 4. They worked there under the direction of the Rev. Fred McGinnis, District Superintendent.

Guest Pastors

The guest pastors conducted a week long program of Visitation Evangelism during which they worked with 150 laymen to visit 783 prospective members. The results were 223 by profession of faith and transfer from other denominations, and 82 Methodist transfers for a total of 305 commitments. Seven of 19 participating churches won more this week than all last conference year and one church more than doubled its membership.

The Alaska Mission Conference had 1,186 members in 1952. In 1955 the conference reported 2,598. With the aid of the endeavor, reception of members is ten per cent ahead of last year, with three months of the conference year still to be counted.



The Erie Story

Victorious Evangelism Through Interdenominational Cooperation

"Seek Christ Now!" This was the challenging theme under which more than 55 Protestant churches of 17 denominations in Greater Erie, Pennsylvania, united for a victorious crusade in evangelism during the fall of 1955. A tremendous spiritual impact was made upon the life of the entire community of 240,000 persons.

Typical Comments

Typical comments and evaluations concerning the Crusade folow:

H. Leslie Christie, pastor, Wayne Park Baptist Church, General Chairman: "We were made happy in our unity while sharing the central task of the Christian Church. . . . Our churches have a new sense of responsibility in the field of evangelism and are better prepared to follow through in the months ahead."

G. Weir Hartman, Executive Secretary, the Erie Council of Churches: "The Crusade was rooted in the churches. It was a program of the churches, for the churches. . . . the largest and most effective program our churches have ever undertaken." (Mr. Hartman carried a major leadership responsibility.)

Albert Marriott, Methodist District Superintendent: "It was the biggest and most meaningful event in the life of Erie Protestantism in five decades."

Mr. Roy Hackenberg, Chairman, the Publicity Committee: ". . . only eternity will tell of the real results of the Crusade."

Mrs. Henry Holnwood, member of the Mass Evangelism Committee, "God searched the hearts of His people and brought scores to renewed dedication. . . ."

Francis Thom, pastor, First United Presbyterian Church: "I have been challenged anew to preach for decisions. Our people are enthusiastic. Church attendance has increased 50 per cent."

Organization

Initiated in the fall of 1954, the Greater Erie Evangelistic Crusade was more than a year in planning and organization. Eugene E. Golay, of the staff of the Methodist General Board of Evangelism, served as Executive Director. Fifty-five pastors and nearly 2,400 lay persons shared the responsibilities in carrying out the various phases.

Under the direction of the Crusade Executive Committee, 11 major committees developed the emphases and features of the Crusade: Prayer, Religious Census, Visitation Evangelism, Church Attendance, Publicity, Radio-Television, Extension, Youth, Mass Evangelism, Special Activities, and Finance.

In each local church there were four committees responsible for developing participation: Prayer, Visitation Evangelism, Attendance and Promotion, and Spiritual Life and Assimiliation.

Values

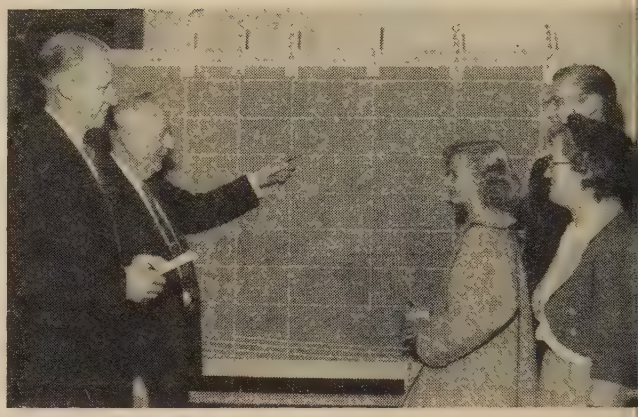
Commenting on the thrilling results of the Crusade, Mr. Hartman, Executive Secretary of the Erie Council of Churches lists eight positive values in the interdenominational united program:

1. Many new people were discovered and won for Christ and the Church. For others, the united effort was the occasion providing sufficient momentum to bring them to decision.
2. Moral and spiritual values were quickened throughout the community.
3. Our Protestant people were encouraged and made to feel a part of the great on-going movement of the Church, defeating frustration and a feeling of weakness.
4. The possibility and actuality of all churches finding opportunity for cooperation was achieved through the broad and many-phased program. This gave a sense of togetherness.
5. The churches of the older, major denominations were united in an evangelism program, which refuted the charges of some fringe groups that these churches are not interested in evangelism.
6. The community was made aware of the vitality and aggressiveness of the Protestant Churches.
7. Great numbers of lay persons of all denominations were brought into a participation through which they made friends among all the churches.
8. The crusade demonstrated that a vital program of evangelism can be carried out by all the churches without stirring up prejudices and creating controversies.

The Erie Sto

1.

1. The Crusade Executive Committee of laymen and ministers gave concerned leadership throughout the Crusade.



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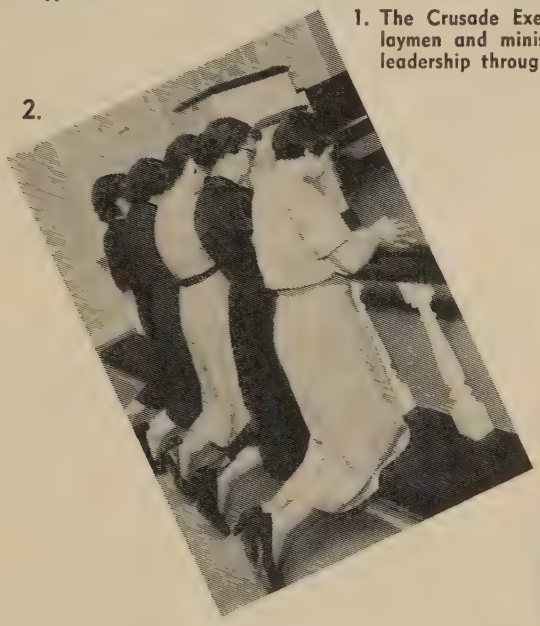
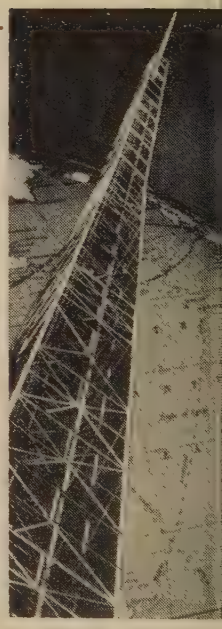


2.

2. Prayer groups were organized in the churches and 24-hour Prayer Vigils were conducted.

3. Early in the fall, 2,000 lay persons carried out a community-wide Religious Census. Thousands of prospects for church membership were discovered.



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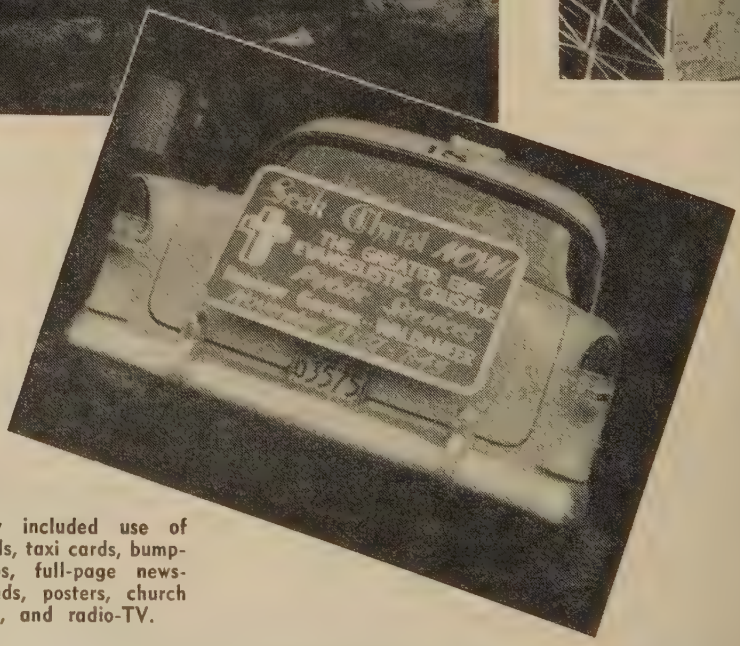


6. More than 500 lay visitors went out from the seven training centers in the four nights of visitation evangelism. They interviewed 2,438 persons, securing 395 first commitments to Christ, 269 transfers of membership, and 88 reaffirmations of faith—a total of 752 decisions.

6.

4. Publicity included use of billboards, taxi cards, bumper strips, full-page newspaper ads, posters, church bulletins, and radio-TV.

5. Special radio and television programs were presented at strategic times throughout the Crusade. During the two weeks of public services there were daily radio and television shows.

Pictures

7.

8.

7. Youth shared in every phase of the Crusade. Here four young people prepare to go witnessing.

8. Youth rallies were conducted each Saturday night of the mass evangelism phase.

9.

9. The Rainbow Gardens dance hall was converted into a beautiful tabernacle for the public preaching services.

10. Dr. Harry Denman, Executive Secretary of the General Board of Evangelism of The Methodist Church, was the dynamic preacher for the services.

11. Large and responsive crowds attended the preaching services. Hundreds responded to the call for decisions. Music was under the direction of the Rev. and Mrs. Iner Bassinger of Parkersburg, West Virginia.

10.

11.

CIRCULATION STUDY OF THE UPPER ROOM FOR 1955

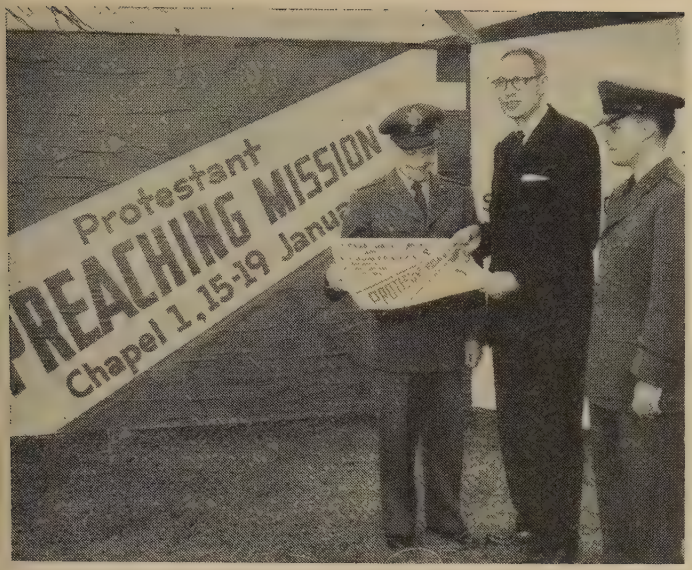
UPPER ROOM Circulation	Rank (49)	STATE	Population	Rank (49)	% Population in Circulation	Rank (49)	Households in Population	% Households in Circulation
New England States								
12,172	36	Maine	930,000	36	1.3%	31	254,668	4.7%
5,974	43	New Hampshire	533,000	45	1.1%	37*	155,174	3.8%
5,607	44	Vermont	386,000	46	1.4%	27*	103,538	5.4%
32,717	29	Massachusetts	5,000,000	9	0.6%	45*	1,307,450	2.5%
3,586	46	Rhode Island	832,000	38	0.4%	48	225,558	1.6%
13,979	34	Connecticut	2,251,000	27	0.6%	45*	570,409	2.4%
Middle Atlantic States								
161,125	3	New York	15,539,000	1	1.0%	40*	4,329,699	3.7%
63,915	15	New Jersey	5,312,000	8	1.2%	32*	1,374,477	4.6%
245,833	1	Pennsylvania	10,854,000	3	2.3%	7*	2,918,632	8.5%
East North Central States								
198,202	2	Ohio	8,655,000	5	2.3%	7*	2,314,629	8.5%
112,799	7	Indiana	4,276,000	11	2.6%	5	1,169,306	9.6%
131,459	5	Illinois	9,239,000	4	1.4%	27*	2,585,772	5.1%
99,931	9	Michigan	7,126,000	7	1.4%	27*	1,791,651	5.6%
42,381	25	Wisconsin	3,602,000	16	1.2%	32*	968,184	4.3%
West North Central States								
44,547	22	Minnesota	3,123,000	19	1.4%	27*	845,733	5.3%
71,173	13	Iowa	2,644,000	22	2.7%	5*	780,999	9.1%
68,558	14	Missouri	4,191,000	12	1.6%	21*	1,198,977	5.7%
10,926	39	North Dakota	638,000	42	1.7%	18*	162,184	6.7%
12,166	37	South Dakota	669,000	41	1.8%	16*	182,981	6.7%
30,430	31	Nebraska	1,372,000	34	2.2%	9*	394,615	7.7%
57,017	17	Kansas	2,038,000	29	2.8%	2	587,678	9.7%
South Atlantic States								
11,034	38	Delaware	373,000	47	3.0%	1	90,361	12.2%
50,975	18	Maryland	2,637,000	23	1.9%	14*	640,526	7.9%
12,894	35	D. of Columbia	870,000	37	1.5%	25*	224,099	5.7%
97,166	10	Virginia	3,651,000	14	2.7%	3*	845,716	11.5%
43,182	24	West Virginia	1,950,000	30	2.2%	9*	518,736	8.3%
103,775	8	North Carolina	4,289,000	10	2.4%	6	994,441	10.4%
49,748	20	South Carolina	2,253,000	26	2.2%	9*	514,672	9.7%
75,531	11	Georgia	3,671,000	13	2.1%	13	889,809	8.4%
62,503	15	Florida	3,636,000	15	1.7%	18*	821,982	7.6%
East South Central States								
49,841	19	Kentucky	3,020,000	20	1.6%	21*	779,669	6.4%
73,545	12	Tennessee	3,388,000	17	2.2%	9*	871,277	8.4%
49,225	21	Alabama	3,140,000	18	1.6%	21*	786,205	6.3%
38,079	26	Mississippi	2,219,000	28	1.7%	18*	554,776	6.9%
West South Central								
35,117	27	Arkansas	1,916,000	31	1.8%	16*	524,708	6.7%
33,153	28	Louisiana	2,987,000	21	1.1%	37*	724,534	4.5%
43,664	23	Oklahoma	2,274,000	25	1.9%	14*	663,292	6.6%
139,536	4	Texas	8,579,000	6	1.6%	21*	2,190,820	6.4%
Mountain States								
7,893	42	Montana	635,000	43	1.2%	32*	175,614	4.5%
5,508	45	Idaho	620,000	44	0.9%	42*	169,264	3.2%
3,174	47	Wyoming	316,000	48	1.0%	40*	84,288	3.8%
21,825	32	Colorado	1,459,000	33	1.5%	25*	391,577	5.6%
8,510	41	New Mexico	793,000	39	1.1%	37*	177,216	4.8%
9,294	40	Arizona	1,023,000	35	0.9%	42*	210,403	4.4%
1,425	49	Utah	766,000	40	0.2%	49	188,075	0.8%
1,472	48	Nevada	224,000	49	0.6%	45*	50,288	2.9%
Pacific States								
30,875	30	Washington	2,560,000	24	1.2%	32*	736,988	4.2%
20,218	33	Oregon	1,656,000	32	1.2%	32*	479,294	4.2%
115,440	6	California	12,904,000	2	0.9%	42*	3,336,391	3.4%

* Tied

Circulation figures: November-December issue, 1955

Population figures: *Information Please 1956 Almanac* (1955 Bulletin, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company).

Household figures: *Printers' Ink*, October 29, 1954 (1950 Census).



Chaplains Dan Jorgensen and Fred Wilson show Dr. Charles B. Foelsch, President of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, one of the 150 posters erected at McClellan Air Force Base, California, announcing the Protestant Preaching Mission. Ten Sacramento churches participated in the noon-day and evening services.

One of America's Great Evangelistic Opportunities

THE MILITARY PREACHING MISSION

by Chaplain Dan Jorgensen
McClellan Air Force Base, California

IT is true that one of the great evangelistic opportunities of our age is the military preaching mission.

In the Air Force alone, every Air Base is required by directives to have a preaching mission for each faith group once a year.

Many clergymen of various denominations have generously contributed their time to this new field of evangelism. Many outstanding clergymen have been sent at government expense to overseas areas for this express purpose.

As one chaplain who has conducted missions in various states of the union, as well as in Korea and Japan, I would like to testify to their effectiveness.

On the whole, the effectiveness of a mission depends on the preparation made for it. This would be true in an individual church or a city-wide or interdenominational endeavor.

Climactic Experience

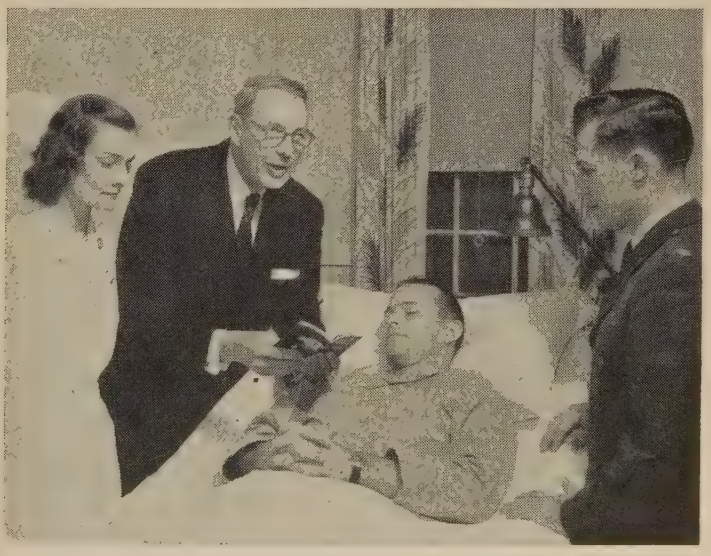
Our Preaching Mission at McClellan Air Base, California, was the climax of a three-week spiritual life endeavor.

The first week was dedicated to prayer. We distributed prayer life cards and devotional books to chapel attendants and encouraged private and family devotions. We found THE UPPER ROOM to be a most useful tool in this work. Our daily noon-hour devotional programs in the chapel each workday of that week were devoted to prayer for a deepening of the spiritual life on our base. The midweek service was devoted entirely to prayer for this purpose as well.

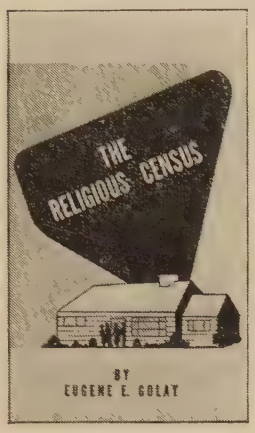
The second week was used for visitation. In this week we encouraged chapel attendants to visit through the barracks and in their neighborhoods, to make the Mission a topic of conversation with their fellow workers and acquaintances. Visitors made calls for the

Dr. Charles B. Foelsch cuts the cake for one of the fellowship periods during the Protestant Preaching Mission at McClellan Air Force Base. Shown with him are Chaplains Fred Wilson and Dan Jorgensen and T/Sgt Cliff Childers (right) who was the baker.

Dr. Charles B. Foelsch, President of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and Chaplain Fred Wilson explain the use of *The Upper Room* to a hospital patient during the Protestant Preaching Mission at McClellan Air Force Base, California.



The Key
to *Your*
Community



The Religious Census

by

Eugene E. Golay

A helpful "how" book pointing up effective ways of taking the religious census. Based on the experience of thousands of churches, this edition contains a helpful section on the telephone census. Vital to your planning for any program of Visitation Evangelism. Give one to every member of your Commission.

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TIDINGS

Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

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Mission in the homes on the base and in Wherry Housing.

Also, during the week we released our major publicity through Sacramento newspapers, broadcast announcements over radio and TV stations, erected 150 attractive posters on the base, made daily bulletin announcements, and put up a huge three-panel billboard at Gate 1 through which more than 14,000 cars pass each day.

Cooperative Program

The third week was the Preaching Mission. Ten Sacramento churches of various denominations participated through the services of their pastors, choirs, and soloists. Our speaker was Charles B. Foelsch, president of the Pacific Lutheran Seminary. We try to have the speakers come from various denominations each year. Last year our speaker was Carl Stocking, Superintendent of the Fresno District, The Methodist Church.

Our Mission opened on Sunday with dual morning services and an evening service, followed with a fellowship hour. Each day of the week we had a half-hour noon-day service so planned as to allow those of McClellan's 16,000 civilian and 4,000 military personnel who were interested to attend on their lunch break. The evening services were set for 7:00 o'clock to allow family participation and a fellowship hour with refreshments after the service. Refreshments were served by the Aero-Knights, a chapel organization.

Dr. Foelsch addressed the Unit Commanders in their monthly meeting, visited various commanders on the base, and visited in the hospital, on the flight line, and in the various clubs.

The impact of these missions has been felt throughout the base. I know several young men preparing for the ministry in college and seminary because of decisions made in such missions. I have seen family problems, moral problems, and personality problems resolved through the power of God experienced in such missions.

Lasting Influence

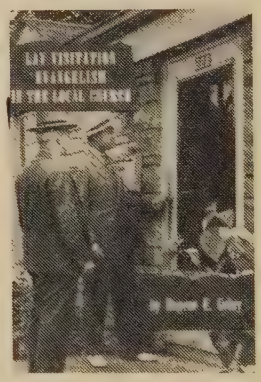
As a rule, the influence of the mission lasts long after the speaker has gone. If the mission is preceded by a time of prayer for its preparation, and followed with a period of visitation, it will result in a time of blessing.

I am happy that it is part of the chaplain's six-point program. I am grateful, along with my fellow chaplains, for the many churches and pastors who make this program possible.

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR HEADQUARTERS FOR EVANGELISTIC MATERIALS

Lay Visitation Evangelism in the Local Church

by
Eugene E. Golay



This new book presents the "why" and the "how" of effective lay calling. It shows how church members can win persons to Christ through the face-to-face presentation of His redemptive claims.

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TIDINGS

1908 Grand Ave., Nashville, Tenn.

Friendliness in the Church--- An Evangelistic Factor

by W. Wilson Carvell
Pastor
St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

THE importance of friendliness in human life cannot be overestimated. It is what all of us seek and deeply desire. One can easily say, without fear of contradiction, that there is no real living without friendship.

A heart-warming example of the joy that friendliness brings to the heart is beautifully illustrated by something that happened to Sam Walter Foss. One warm, dusty day he walked a great distance, busy with his thoughts. Suddenly he realized how hot and tired he was. There, beside him along that dusty road, was an inviting shade tree. Into its cooling breeze he went, only to pleasantly discover a little sign tacked to the trunk which said: "There is a good spring inside the fence. Come and drink if you are thirsty." Sam Walter Foss climbed the fence, saw the spring and gratefully drank from its cool, soothing waters.

Shared Blessings

Then he became aware of a little bench under the tree. Tacked to this bench was another sign: "Sit down and rest awhile if you are tired." Sam Walter Foss sat down, intrigued and amazed. Next his eyes fell on a barrel of apples. There was a third sign: "If you like apples, just help yourself." He took a nice red one. While he was eating, he noticed an elderly man nearby watching him with interest. There was a sparkle in his eye. "Hello there," said Sam Walter Foss, "Is this your place?" "Yes," replied the man, "and I'm glad you stopped by."

He then explained the reason for the signs. The water was running away to the sea; the bench was collecting dust in the attic; the apples were only going to waste. So he and his wife thought it would be neighborly to share these blessings with those who journeyed by. Yes, many had stopped there to be refreshed in body and spirit. And they had met a host of new friends. "You must like people," remarked Sam Walter Foss. "Of course," replied the elderly man, "don't you?"

All the way home Sam Walter Foss thought about his strange and heart-warming experience. A line from Homer's "Iliad" kept running through his mind: "He was a friend of man, and lived in a house by the side of the road." And he wrote his classic poem so familiar to all and so very popular, too, because it speaks so directly both to the need and to the happiness of the human soul.

To "be a friend to man" is somehow central to the purpose of human existence. It is central in the teachings of Jesus: "I have called you friends" (John 15:15). And so Paul understood the religion of Jesus and put it in his classic chapter: "If I have not love . . .," I am nothing and have nothing! This matter of love and of friendliness was so characteristic of the early Christians that their enemies unwantingly paid tribute: "Behold, how these Christians love one another."

The Christian churches today must not forget the value and the need for friendliness. That need is perhaps greater today than any time in history because in our society there is so much emphasis on the "impersonal." People within our churches must be friendly among themselves. This friendliness should be so genuine and permeating as to be readily apparent to the visitor whenever he comes to church. This same friendliness ought to engulf him like the incoming tide engulfs the beaches along the sea. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

Last summer my family and I spent our vacation in New England. We went into strange churches on five different Sundays. Purposely, we refrained from disclosing our identity. We waited for someone to greet us. In four of the churches not a single person spoke to us, let alone shook our hands! Not even the preacher! Taking into consideration that it was vacation time, nevertheless, our experience seems to indicate that we people of the churches are not very friendly to visitors who join us in worship! Why?

I suspect some of the reason is that we are not very friendly among ourselves. Oh, it is not that we are at odds with one another. That is relatively rare. We simply haven't time for friendliness. Our social centers are mostly outside the church. Our present-day tempo of living is not conducive to that kind of cohesive fellowship which the enemies of the Christians noticed existed in the early Church. We have not been real friends toward one another nor toward the stranger that comes into our worship. We have forgotten our Master's injunction: "I have called you friends."

Looking back over our experience last summer, I am more than ever convinced that we frequently fail in our evangelistic outreach and inreach because our churches are not the friendly places they ought to be.

Important Way

Recently, I was greatly disturbed when, in looking through forty or fifty books on evangelism, the how and why of it, I did not find a single volume that devoted even one chapter to "Friendliness in the Church—an Evangelistic Factor!" Nor any subject similar! I could hardly believe my eyes. But there it was. So important a way and means, neglected! I was disturbed. Has the basis of human life changed so that friendliness no longer counts? Is the Church set in an age when friendliness is no longer important to the Christian message and work? In communicating the Gospel of our Lord within and without the Church, is friendliness now dispensable?

I believe in the friendly church. I do my best to help create that kind of a church. As a worshipper, that kind of church is what my spirit wants and needs. It has always been my observation that the growing, vital churches are the friendly churches.

It seems to me that one of the crying

needs in the field of evangelism today is for every congregation to spend some time and energy in grappling with the problem of developing a genuinely friendly atmosphere within the church. Admittedly, the minister is central in any successful solution. But every leader must be included, every member, every organization, and even the janitor! Every spirit within the entire congregational life must be a friendly spirit. Every word that is spoken and every act that is done must radiate love, compassion, and friendliness.

Warm Welcome

During the worship service, this spirit must begin with the ushers. Members should be warmly greeted and seated. Strangers, even while they are coming into the church should be able to see the evident and genuine smile on the face of the man at the door or the aisle. Visitors and members should be spoken to. I am old-fashioned enough to believe in the cordial handshake. First impressions of what a congregation is like are traceable to the ushers!

This minister himself should be friendly in manner, voice, and word. He should not fail to welcome any strangers who may be worshipping in the church that day.

At the close of the service, what an atmosphere of friendliness could be created throughout the entire congregation if, Sunday after Sunday, people would shake hands with those next to them and speak some cordial words of greeting. Visitors could be discovered simply by saying, "You are a member of this congregation?" if the person is not known. Indeed, how many prospective members could be identified by such a simple, friendly question and the information handed to the minister. Or better still, the visitor could be personally introduced by the discoverer to the minister shaking hands with the people at the door.

This kind of procedure, genuinely applied to any church's entire organization and program would soon develop what Dr. Berlyn V. Farris, Executive Secretary of Evangelism for the National Council of Churches, calls the "person-centered church." Precisely that is what is needed in our churches during these days of impersonalization. How the members themselves would cherish the dear "nearness" within their fellowship! How the visitor coming to worship would be impressed! How the world-at-large would sense and take notice!

Evangelistic Power

Other things have their place, of course, in the creation of a friendly church; the parish paper, lay visitation through the Undershepherd or some other plan, integrating members with other members through organizations, Guild Circles, and sponsors. But nothing will take the place of the personal approach, where the entire congregation regards people as persons one by one in every true sense of the word and where each one is deeply concerned and interested in every person who is seeking after the same life, the same soul-satisfying bond of affection. To "be a friend to man!" "I have called you friends." Let no one minimize the evangelistic power of pure and true friendliness.

—Permission, "The Advance Advocate" published by the Commission on Evangelism of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Evangelistic Reading Makes Evangelistic Churches

50c each; 12 or more, any title, 35c each

The Christian Gospel and Its Witness, *by James R. Mutchmor.* A stimulating discussion of evangelistic motivation.

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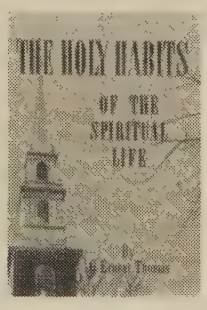
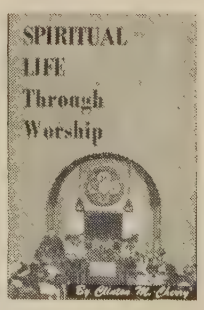
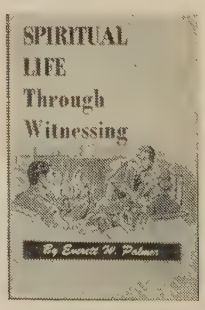
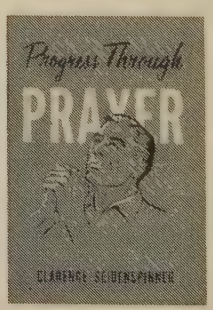








A People's Willingness to Work
And a Community's Cooperation Bring

An Unusual Growth in Church Membership

by David W. Williams
Pastor, Hartzell Memorial Methodist Church
Rossmoyne, Ohio

Hartzell Memorial Methodist Church is a small church (270 members as of June 1, 1955) in the unincorporated village of Rossmoyne, located just northeast of Cincinnati, Ohio. Like many villages which are near a large urban center, it is becoming rapidly surrounded by new homes, shopping centers, and small factories. The churches are suffering the pangs of "growing pains" even while they are enjoying the fruits thereof.

This church has had a local preacher until this year; but, under his fine leadership, it was awakened to the possibilities of greater growth and was led to the conclusion that it could support a Conference man. The idea was that, under the new leadership, the growth and development would be limited only by the people's willingness to work.

It became my delightful privilege to be assigned to the church with the assurance that, if I would furnish the leadership, the people would cooperate to the full extent of their ability. This they have done very well. Our achievements are but the reflection of the spirit of cooperation and devotion of many people seeking to do God's work as He would have it done.

I would like to give special credit to the Commissions on Membership and Evangelism and on Education. They have both contributed much to our success. I desire also to acknowledge the helpfulness of the church school superintendent and teachers whose zeal was evident from the very beginning.

Family Evangelism

Since I was trained in the field of sociology, it is not strange that one of my favorite evangelistic approaches is to the family. I contend that the family is the basic unit of society and that families won as units are much more likely to continue in the service of our Lord than when segments of those units are trying to follow Him apart from the rest. As I go about in my pastoral calling, every home is a potential altar of prayer. Nor do I hesitate to make an approach toward family decisions. One-half of all persons received have come as families—or at least all the adult members.

Let me say here that there is no substitute for pastoral calling. While I was getting acquainted with my parish, I found many people waiting to make such decisions and dedications. By August I had six family dedications. By October I had 11 more.

Here I would like to mention the helpfulness of two organizations outside the church. The Deer Park Board of Education gave us maps covering a large part of the parish; and the Welcome Wagon, Incorporated, has been very helpful in distributing literature, invitations, etc., as well as in notifying us of any Methodists moving into the community or any persons having no church affiliation. I receive regular calls from their representative, and I follow her information with a personal call as soon as possible.

The Commission on Membership and Evangelism took as its first project of the year the task of visiting all inactive members and reported their findings to me. A call on my part has brought some of them back into an active relationship. This fine work on the Commission's part does not show up in the number of members received, but it does show up in the attendance.

Youth Evangelism

Aware that Christmas would come on Sunday, we were all agreed that this presented a very real opportunity to evangelize among the youth of the church. We saw the possibility of challenging them with the idea of presenting themselves to God in appreciation of what He had done for us. The very least that we could do, in accepting His gift, was to give ourselves in return.

Here the Commission on Education gave fine support and cooperation. When I presented the idea to the teachers, they not only gave their hearty and complete approval, but they joined hands with us in a marvellous way. Much fine teaching had already paved the way for us, and the teachers set to work helping to enroll members for the membership training class.

I went into every class, personally presented the challenge and the commitment cards, and let the teachers take it from there. The cards were sent home by the pupils. They were asked to make their commitment with the full knowledge and approval of their parents. Nearly 50 boys and girls of the intermediate age returned the cards, and I started the class immediately.

The only room we have that is large enough to accommodate such a class was used by the Methodist Men. How-

Present for worship services on January 22, 1956, are persons received at Christmas into the membership of Hartzell Memorial Methodist Church, Rossmoyne, Ohio, by the pastor, David W. Williams.

ever, that problem was solved when the men joined the ladies in the sanctuary for their classes.

The membership training class met during the Sunday school hour. I taught the class, using the textbook by Leila Rumble, *A Manual for Teen-Agers*.

As an accompaniment to our evangelistic appeal, our church has grown in every department. We are now holding two services each Sunday with great success.

On Christmas we received not only our preparatory class, but others who had been won in their homes and for whom letters of transfer had been obtained. It was truly a great harvest of souls, for at the two services I baptized 20 adults and youth, received 55 persons on profession of faith, and 10 by letter. At each service, with such a large class assembled about our altar, I felt that the new members should have a right to hear all the members reaffirm their faith. Everyone stood and took the vows anew.

We had our goal for 100 new members to be received by Christmas. When the reports of the two services were tallied, we discovered that we had received 101. God had been very good to us.

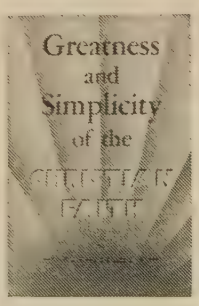
Assimilation

We are bending every effort toward assimilating the new members into the active fellowship of the Church. One man was serving as an usher the day he was received. Others are serving on committees looking toward and preparing for a new church. Some have already been installed on the Membership and Evangelism Commission, for it is our belief that no person has enjoyed his salvation to the fullest until he has won someone, or least borne his witness in the attempt to win another. This is the spirit on which we must depend for further victories.

Our church membership has already increased more than 37 per cent this year; but we are determined, by God's help, to make it more than 50 per cent. We are registering all new attendants every Sunday. Prospect cards are in the hands of all members at all times. Visitors are calling on those whom we failed to win before the Christmas ingathering. People are becoming increasingly conscious of their individual responsibilities in this matter, and a moving van scarcely leaves a house before I receive one or more calls. Not long ago I received two calls to visit a home before the van got away. Sometimes the caller has obtained some basic information before calling me, such as name, creed, size and age of family, etc. This is a great time saver for me. We have not exhausted the appeal of the above methods and we still have mass evangelism, two-by-two visitation, and many more means which we expect to use in making the appeal in the near future.

It is a thrilling sight to see pews filled with young people every Sunday. They are the church of the future. Best of all, they are bringing their parents with them.

Already we have a Chapel Choir organized largely from our Christmas class. It consists of more than 30 voices and is led by our school music teacher. The members range in age from 9 to 15 and will constitute our choir for the early service.



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Shown under construction is the Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church.

A Rural Church Brings New Life To Its Community

by
Dallas Mallison
Oriental, North Carolina

BY decisive action an affirmative answer has been given to the question as to whether or not the country church should be abandoned in modern rural life by a 200-year-old, tobacco-growing community in Southeastern Nash County, North Carolina.

In demonstrating that the modern country church can be a virile and growing institution and an integral and leading part of a community's life, Mt. Pleasant has also shown several other things which can be important in our country life.

Building Program

Mt. Pleasant has shown most convincingly how a rural area, through its own leadership and resources, can initiate and carry through a sustained building program. It has emphatically demonstrated how a rural minister and his wife can provide virile and progressive leadership on the community-wide basis needed in our rural communities. It has shown how the men, women, and youth in a farming community can pull together and how each can find his place and do his part in a sustained community program of development and betterment. It has pointed the way to other rural communities by which a rich and adequate program can be set up to make provision for the recreational, religious, and social needs of its young people. Finally, it has shown other rural areas how both white and Negro citizens can work together smoothly and harmoniously to their mutual benefit in a spirit of Christian brotherly love.

Accident, crisis, necessity, and opportunity all played a part in the initiation and development of a truly unique and outstanding rural community program which covered a span of seven years (1947-1954) and which gave Mt. Pleasant a new church, a new parsonage, a new community center, and a renovated Sunday school building at a total value of $125,000.

But as great as are the monetary and physical gains that have occurred to Mt. Pleasant, the spiritual, educational, and broadly social benefits are even more significant and lasting.

In the fall of 1947 the church at Bailey, (a small town about five miles distant) which was on the circuit with Mt. Pleasant, decided to become a station and took over the old charge parsonage. A new Methodist charge or circuit was set up with three member churches—Mt. Pleasant, Sims, and Middlesex. The North Carolina Conference provided the new charge with a minister.

When the young minister married, a modern $20,000 new charge parsonage was provided in a matter of a few months.

Not long afterward opportunity knocked at Mt. Pleasant's door when the Nash County Board of Education offered the church an abandoned elementary school building if it would make effective use of it. The church accepted the offer; and in six months the building had been torn down, moved a short distance, and rebuilt as a modern and attractive community center. Well equipped, it is worth $15,000.

Big Venture

Inspired by these successes, Mt. Pleasant was emboldened to embark upon a really big venture—something of which it had done no more than dream for years. It wanted a modern new church and a religious education plant. It decided, after much soul-searching, to do something about the dream despite bad farming conditions resulting from a hailstorm in midsummer and successive seasons of drought.

Early in September of 1954 the people of Mt. Pleasant moved into their beautiful new church, valued at $75,000, including equipment. A large brick section of the old church had been left standing. This was renovated and made into a modern new Sunday school building, valued at $10,000.

A most remarkable aspect of the whole venture in community faith and action is that the entire building program was accomplished on a virtual "pay-as-you-go" basis and without attempting to borrow a cent from any bank or Church Extension Board. All but a small part of the actual labor

A typical "Harvest Day Festival" conducted by the Mt. Pleasant Church as a means of fund-raising.

was provided, without cost, by the men in the community. They worked on rainy days, during slack seasons, and especially in the winter. The women assumed the responsibility of raising money—and they never failed to come through. The youth responded with their own fund-raising efforts.

Other significant and concrete gains associated with the Mt. Pleasant community as a result of its seven-year improvement program include membership gains of one-third or more in both the church membership and the Sunday school enrollment; the organization of a Boy Scout troop; increased attendance at Daily Vacation Bible Schools; and a large increase in the membership of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, as well as increased participation of the young folks in church affairs.

Other Gains

Both the women's and the men's adult Bible classes became potent and progressive forces in Mt. Pleasant. The ladies formed a community club for all women in the area. This also became a very powerful element in leading and supporting the over-all program.

Each year the annual budget has been met; and, in addition, contributions to foreign and home missions have more than doubled.

During this time, the people of Mt. Pleasant helped a neighboring Negro congregation to renovate and equip its own church by providing both materials and gifts of money.

Because of spatial limitations and, more importantly, because the Mt. Pleasant story is one of community-wide effort in which many persons played leading parts, no effort has been made here to list any of the persons involved. However, the Mt. Pleasant people themselves would like to mention their pastor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. House, who spent four years with them as impelling dynamos in the whole undertaking. In the fall of 1954 the Houses were sent to another area of service, the Tar River Charge, located at Kittrell in Vance County.

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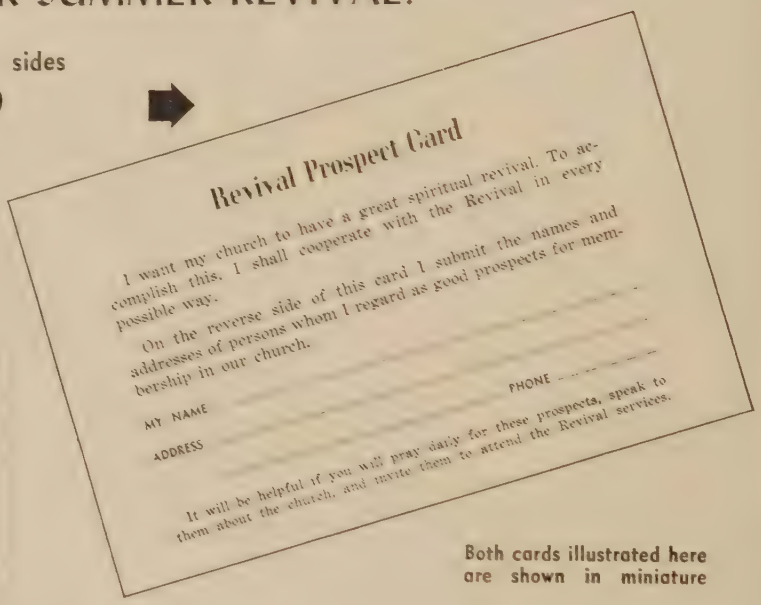
Revival Prospect Card
I want my church to have a great spiritual revival. To accomplish this, I shall cooperate with the Revival in every possible way.
On the reverse side of this card I submit the names and addresses of persons whom I regard as good prospects for membership in our church.
MY NAME
PHONE
ADDRESS
It will be helpful if you will pray daily for these prospects, speak to them about the church, and invite them to attend the Revival services.

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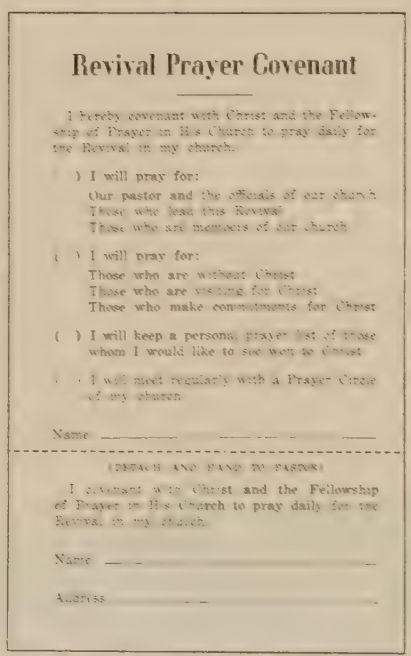
Revival Prayer Covenant
I Hereby covenant with Christ and the Fellowship of Prayer in His Church to pray daily for the Revival in my church.
( ) I will pray for:
Our pastor and the officials of our church
Those who lead this Revival
Those who are members of our church
( ) I will pray for:
Those who are without Christ
Those who are waiting for Christ
Those who make commitments for Christ
( ) I will keep a personal prayer list of those whom I would like to see won to Christ
( ) I will meet regularly with a Prayer Circle of my church
Name
DETACH AND HAND TO PASTOR
I covenant with Christ and the Fellowship of Prayer in His Church to pray daily for the Revival in my church.
Name
Address

Both cards illustrated here are shown in miniature

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Quantity *Amount*

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Spiritual Life Evangelism

Turn Over Chart

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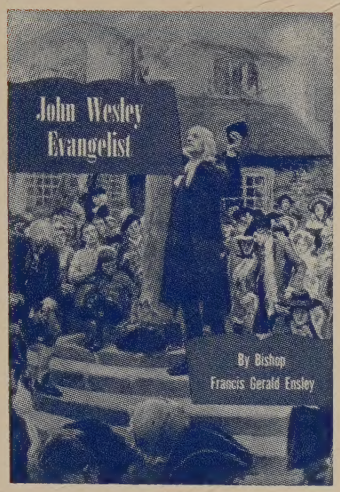

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